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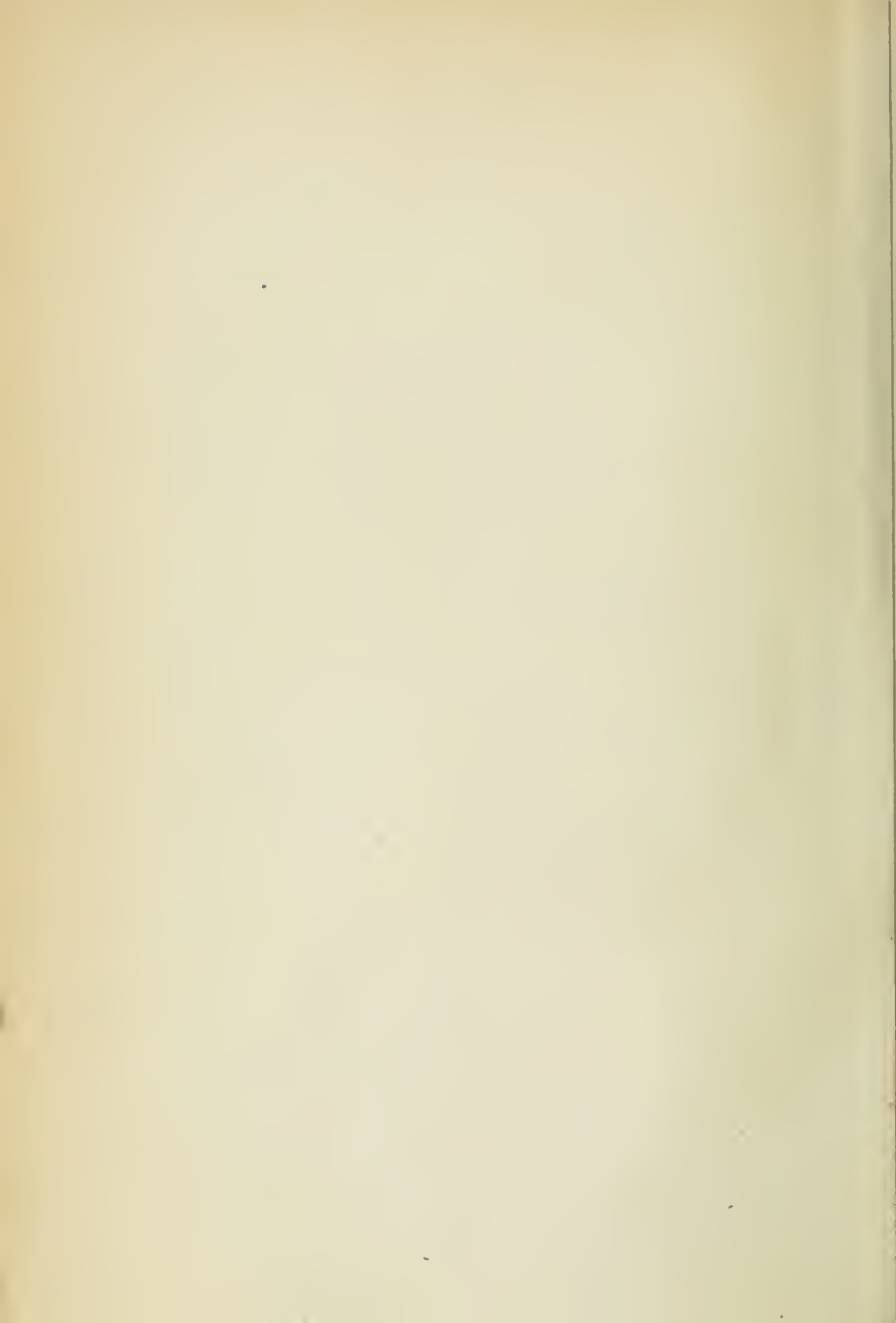
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SWINBURNE'S
POETICAL WORKS.

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POETICAL WORKS

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

COMPLETE IN TWO VOLUMES.

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POEMS AND BALLADS.

A BALLAD OF LIFE.

I FOUND in dreams a place of wind and
flowers,
Full of sweet trees and color of glad
grass,

In midst whereof there was
A lady clothed like summer with sweet
hours,

Her beauty, fervent as a fiery moon
Made my blood burn and swoon
Like a flame rained upon.

Sorrow had filled her shaken eyelids' blue,
And her mouth's sad red heavy rose all
through
Seemed sad with glad things gone.

She held a little cithern by the strings,
Shaped heartwise, strung with subtle-
colored hair

Of some dead lute player
That in dead years had done delicious
things.

The seven strings were named accordingly ;
The first string charity,
The second tenderness,

The rest were pleasure, sorrow, sleep, and
sin,
And loving kindness, that is pity's kin
And is most pitiless.

There were three men with her, each gar-
mented
With gold and shod with gold upon the
feet ;
And with plucked ears of wheat.

The first man's hair was wound upon his
head :

His face was red, and his mouth curled and
sad ;

All his gold garment had
Pale stains of dust and rust.

A riven hood was pulled across his eyes ;
The token of him being upon this wise
Made for a sign of Lust.

The next was Shame, with hollow heavy
face

Colored like green wood when flame
kindles it.

He hath such feeble feet

They may not well endure in any place.

His face was full of grey old miseries,

And all his blood's increase

Was even increase of pain.

The last was Fear, that is akin to Death ;

He is Shame's friend, and always as Shame
saith

Fear answers him again.

My soul said in me ; This is marvellous,
Seeing the air's face is not so delicate

Nor the sun's grace so great,

If sin and she be kin or amorous.

And seeing where maidens served her on
their knees,

I bade one crave of these

To know the cause thereof.

Then Fear said : I am Pity that was dead.

And Shame said : I am Sorrow comforted.

And Lust said : I am Love.

Thereat her hands began a lute-playing
And her sweet mouth a song in a strange
tongue ;

And all the while she sung
There was no sound but long tears follow-
ing

Long tears upon men's faces, waxen white.
With extreme sad delight.

But those three following men
Became as men raised up among the dead ;
Great glad mouths open, and fair cheeks
made red

With child's blood come again.

Then I said : Now assuredly I see
My lady is perfect, and transfigureth
All sin and sorrow and death,
Making them fair as her own eyelids be,
Or lips wherein my whole soul's life abides ;
Or as her sweet white sides
And bosom carved to kiss.
Now therefore, if her pity further me.

Doubtless for her sake all my days shall be
As righteous as she is.

Forth, ballad, and take roses in both arms,
Even till the top rose touch thee in the
throat

Where the least thornprick harms ;
And girdled in thy golden singing-coat,
Come thou before my lady and say this ;
Borgia, thy gold hair's color burns in
me,

Thy mouth makes beat my blood in
feverish rhymes ;

Therefore so many as these roses be,
Kiss me so many times.

Then it may be, seeing how sweet she is,
That she will stoop herself none other-
wise

Than a blown vine-branch doth,
And kiss thee with soft laughter on thine
eyes,

Ballad, and on thy mouth.

A BALLAD OF DEATH.

KNEEL down, fair Love, and fill thyself
with tears,

Girdle thyself with sighing for a girth
Upon the sides of mirth,
Cover thy lips and eyelids, let thine ears
Be filled with rumor of people sorrowing ;
Make thee soft raiment out of woven sighs
Upon the flesh to cleave,
Set pains therein and many a grievous thing,
And many sorrows after each his wise
For armet and for gorget and for sleeve.

O Love's lute heard about the lands of death,
Left hanged upon the trees that were
therein ;

O Love and Time and Sin,
Three singing mouths that mourn now
under breath,

Three lovers, each one evil spoken of ;
O smitten lips where through this voice of
mine

Came softer with her praise ;
Abide a little for our lady's love.
The kisses of her mouth were more than
wine,

And more than peace the passage of her
days.

O Love, thou knowest if she were good to
see.

O Time, thou shalt not find in any land
Till, cast out of thine hand,
The sunlight and the moonlight fa'l from
thee,

Another woman fashioned like as this.
O Sin, thou knowest that all thy shame in
her

Was made a goodly thing ;
Yea, she caught Shame and shamed him
with her kiss,

With her fair kiss, and lips much lovelier
Than lips of amorous roses in late spring.

By night there stood over against my bed
Queen Venus with a hood striped gold and
black,

Both sides drawn fully back
From brows wherein the sad blood failed
of red,
And temples drained of purple and full of
death.

Her curled hair had the wave of sea-water
 And the sea's gold in it.
 Her eyes were as a dove's that sickeneth.
 Strewn dust of gold she had shed over her,
 And pearl and purple and amber on her
 feet.

Upon her raiment of dyed sendaline
 Were painted all the secret ways of love
 And covered things thereof.
 That hold delight as grape-flowers hold
 their wine;
 Red mouths of maidens and red feet of
 doves,
 And brides that kept within the bride-
 chamber
 Their garment of soft shame,
 And weeping faces of the wearied loves
 That swoon in sleep and awake wearier
 With heat of lips and hair shed out like
 flame.

The tears that through her eyelids fell on
 me
 Made my own bitter where they ran be-
 tween
 As blood had fallen therein,
 She saying; Arise, lift up thine eyes and
 see
 If any glad thing be or any good
 Now the best thing is taken forth of us;
 Even she to whom all praise
 Was as one flower in a great multitude,
 One glorious flower of many and glorious,
 One day found gracious among many days:

Even she whose handmaiden was Love—
 to whom
 At kissing times across her stateliest bed
 Kings bowed themselves and shed
 Pale wine, and honey with the honeycomb,
 And spikenard bruised for a burnt-offering;
 Even she between whose lips the kiss be-
 came
 As fire and frankincense;
 Whose hair was as gold raiment on a king,
 Whose eyes were as the morning purged
 with flame,
 Whose eyelids as sweet savor issuing
 thence.
 Then I beheld, and lo on the other side
 My lady's likeness crowned and robed and
 dead.
 Sweet still, but now not red,
 Was the shut mouth whereby men lived and
 died.

And sweet, but emptied of the blood's blue
 shade,
 The great curled eyelids that withheld her
 eyes.
 And sweet, but like spoilt gold,
 The weight of color in her tresses weighed.
 And sweet, but as a vesture with new dyes,
 The body that was clothed with love of old.

Ah! that my tears filled all her woven hair
 And all the hollow bosom of her gown—
 Ah! that my tears ran down
 Even to the place where many kisses were,
 Even where her parted breast-flowers have
 place,
 Even where they are cloven apart—who
 knows not this?
 Ah! the flowers cleave apart
 And their sweet fills the tender interspace;
 Ah! the leaves grown thereof were things
 to kiss
 Ere their fine gold was tarnished at the
 heart.

Ah! in the days when God did good to
 me,
 Each part about her was a righteous thing;
 Her mouth an almsgiving,
 The glory of her garments charity,
 The beauty of her bosom a good deed,
 In the good days when God kept sight of
 us;
 Love lay upon her eyes,
 And on that hair whereof the world takes
 heed:
 And all her body was more virtuous
 Than souls of women fashioned otherwise.

Now, ballad, gather poppies in thine hands
 And sheaves of briar and many rusted
 sheaves
 Rain-rotten in rank lands,
 Waste marigold and late unhappy leaves
 And grass that fades ere any of it be mown;
 And when thy bosom is filled full thereof
 Seek out Death's face ere the light altereth,
 And say "My master that was thrall to
 Love
 Is become thrall to Death."
 Bow down before him, ballad, sigh and
 groan,
 But make no sojourn in thy outgoing;
 For haply it may be
 That when thy feet return at evening
 Death shall come in with thee.

LAUS VENERIS.

ASLEEP or waking is it? for her neck,
 Kissed over close, wears yet a purple speck,
 Wherein the pained blood falters and
 goes out;
 Soft, and stung softly—fairer for a fleck.

But though my lips shut sucking on the
 place,
 There is no vein at work upon her face;
 Her eyelids are so peaceable, no doubt
 Deep sleep has warmed her blood through
 all its ways.

Lo, this is she that was the world's delight;
 The old grey years were parcels of her
 might;
 The strewings of the ways wherein she
 trod
 Were the twain seasons of the day and
 night.

Lo, she was thus when her clear limbs en-
 ticed
 All lips that now grow sad with kissing
 Christ,
 Stained with blood falling from the feet
 of God,
 The feet and hands whereat our souls were
 priced.

Alas, Lord, surely thou art great and fair.
 But lo her wonderfully woven hair!
 And thou didst heal us with thy piteous
 kiss;
 But see now, Lord; her mouth is lovelier.

She is right fair; what hath she done to
 thee?
 Nay, fair Lord Christ, lift up thine eyes
 and see;
 Had now thy mother such a lip—like
 this?
 Thou knowest how sweet a thing it is to me.

Inside the Horsel here the air is hot;
 Right little peace one hath for it, God wot;

The scented dusty daylight burns the
 air,
 And my heart chokes me till I hear it not.

Behold, my Venus, my soul's body, lies
 With my love laid upon her garment-wise,
 Feeling my love in all her limbs and
 hair
 And shed between her eyelids through her
 eyes.

She holds my heart in her sweet open
 hands
 Hanging asleep; hard by her head there
 stands,
 Crowned with gilt thorns and clothed
 with flesh like fire,
 Love, wan as foam blown up the salt burnt
 sands—

Hot as the brackish waifs of yellow spume
 That shift and steam—loose clots of arid
 fume
 From the sea's panting mouth of dry
 desire;
 There stands he, like one laboring at a
 loom.

The warp holds fast across; and every
 thread
 That makes the woof up has dry specks of
 red;
 Always the shuttle cleaves clean through,
 and he
 Weaves with the hair of many a ruined
 head.

Love is not glad nor sorry, as I deem;
 Laboring he dreams, and labors in the
 dream,
 Till when the spool is finished, lo I see
 His web, reeled off, curls and goes out like
 steam.

Night falls like fire; the heavy lights run
 low,
 And as they drop, my blood and body so-

Shake as the flame shakes, full of days
and hours
That sleep not neither weep they as they
go.

Ah yet would God this flesh of mine might
be
Where air might wash and long leaves
cover me,
Where tides of grass break into foam of
flowers,
Or where the wind's feet shine along the
sea.

Ah yet would God that stems and roots
were bred
Out of my weary body and my head,
That sleep were sealed upon me with a
seal,
And I were as the least of all his dead.

Would God my blood were dew to feed
the grass,
Mine ears made deaf and mine eyes blind
as glass,
My body broken as a turning wheel,
And my mouth stricken ere it saith Alas!

Ah God, that love were as a flower or flame,
That life were as the naming of a name,
That death were not more pitiful than
desire,
That these things were not one thing and
the same!

Behold now, surely somewhere there is
death:
For each man hath some space of years, he
saith.

A little space of time ere time expire,
A little day, a little way of breath.

And lo, between the sundawn and the sun,
His day's work and his night's work are
undone;

And lo, between the nightfall and the
light,
He is not, and none knoweth of such an
one.

Ah God, that I were as all souls that be,
As any herb or leaf of any tree,
As men that toil through hours of labor-
ing night,
As bones of men under the deep sharp sea

Outside it must be winter among men;
For at the gold bars of the gates again
I heard all night and all the hours of it,
The wind's wet wings and fingers drip with
rain.

Knights gather, riding sharp for cold; I
know
The ways and woods are strangled with the
snow;
And with short song the maidens spin
and sit
Until Christ's birthnight, lily-like, arow.

The scent and shadow shed about me make
The very soul in all my senses ache;
The hot hard night is fed upon my breath,
And sleep beholds me from afar awake.

Alas, but surely where the hills grow deep,
Or where the wild ways of the sea are steep,
Or in strange places somewhere there is
death,
And on death's face the scattered hair of
sleep.

There lover-like with lips and limbs that
meet
They lie, they pluck sweet fruit of life and
eat;
But me the hot and hungry days devour,
And in my mouth no fruit of theirs is sweet.

No fruit of theirs, but fruit of my desire,
For her love's sake whose lips through
mine respire;
Her eyelids on her eyes like flower on
flower,
Mine eyelids on mine eyes like fire on fire.

So lie we, not as sleep that lies by death,
With heavy kisses and with happy breath;
Not as man lies by woman, when the
bride
Laughs low for love's sake and the words
he saith.

For she lies, laughing low with love; she
lies
And turns his kisses on her lips to sighs,
To sighing sound of lips unsatisfied,
And the sweet tears are tender with her-
eyes.

Ah, not as they, but as the souls that were

Slain in the old time, having found her fair;
 Who, sleeping with their lips upon their
 eyes,
 Heard sudden serpents hiss across her hair.

Their blood runs round the roots of time
 like rain:

She casts them forth and gathers them
 again;

With nerve and bone she weaves and
 multiplies

Exceeding pleasure out of extreme pain.

Her little chambers drip with flower-like
 red,

Her girdles, and the chaplets of her head,
 Her armlets and her anklets; with her
 feet,

She tramples all that winepress of the dead.

Her gateways smoke with fume of flowers
 and fires,

With loves burnt out and unassuaged de-
 sires;

Between her lips the steam of them is
 sweet,

The langor in her ears of many lyres.

Her beds are full of perfume and sad sound,
 Her doors are made with music and barred
 round

With sighing and with laughter and with
 tears,

With tears whereby strong souls of men are
 bound.

There is the knight Adonis that was slain,
 With flesh and blood she chains him for a
 chain;

The body and the spirit in her ears
 Cry, for her lips divide him vein by vein.

Yea, all she slayeth; yea, every man save
 me;

Me, love, thy lover that must cleave to
 thee

Till the ending of the days and ways of
 earth,

The shaking of the sources of the sea.

Me, most forsaken of all souls that fell;

Me, satiated with things insatiable;

Me, for whose sake the extreme hell
 makes mirth,

Yea, laughter kindles at the heart of hell.

Alas thy beauty! for thy mouth's sweet
 sake

My soul is bitter to me, my limbs quake
 As water as the flesh of men that weep,
 As their heart's vein whose heart goes nigh
 to break.

Ah God, that sleep with flower-sweet finger-
 tips

Would crush the fruit of death upon my
 lips;

Ah, God, that death would tread the
 grapes of sleep

And wring their juice upon me as it drips.

There is no change of cheer for many days,
 But change of chimes high up in the air,
 that sways

Rung by the running fingers of the wind;
 And singing sorrows heard on hidden ways.

Day smiteth day in twain, night sundereth
 night,

And on mine eyes the dark sits as the light;
 Yea, Lord, thou knowest I know not,
 having sinned,

If heaven be clean or unclean in thy sight.

Yea, as if earth were sprinkled over me,
 Such chafed harsh earth as chokes a sandy
 sea,

Each pore doth yearn, and the dried
 blood thereof

Gasps by sick fits, my heart swims heavily.

There is a feverish famine in my veins;
 Below her bosom, where a crushed grape
 stains

The white and blue, there my lips caught
 and clove

An hour since, and what mark of me re-
 mains?

I dare not always touch her, lest the kiss
 Leave my lips charred. Yea, Lord, a lit-
 tle bliss,

Brief bitter bliss, one hath for a great sin;
 Nathless thou knowest how sweet a thing
 it is.

Sin, is it sin whereby men's souls are thrust
 Into the pit? yet had I a good trust

To save my soul before it slipped therein,
 Trod under by the fire-shod feet of lust.

For if mine eyes fail and my soul takes
breath,
I look between the iron sides of death
Into sad hell where all sweet love hath
end,
All but the pain that never finisheth.

There are the naked faces of great kings,
The singing folk with all their lute-playings;
There when one cometh he shall have to
friend
The grave that covets and the worm that
clings.

There sit the knights that were so great of
hand,
The ladies that were queens of fair green
land,
Grown grey and black now, brought
unto the dust,
Soiled, without raiment, clad about with
sand.

There is one end for all of them; they sit
Naked and sad, they drink the dregs of it,
Trodden as grapes in the wine-press of
lust,
Trampled and trodden by the fiery feet.

I see the marvellous mouth whereby there
fell
Cities and people whom the gods loved
well,
Yet for her sake on them the fire gat hold,
And for their sakes on her the fire of hell.

And softer than the Egyptian lote-leaf is,
The queen whose face was worth the world
to kiss,
Wearing at breast a suckling snake of
gold;
And large pale lips of strong Semiramis.

Curled like a tiger's that curl back to feed;
Red only where the last kiss made them
bled;
Her hair most thick with many a carven
gem,
Deep in the mane, great-chested, like a
steed.

Yea, with red sin the faces of them shine;
But in all these there was no sin like mine;
No, not in all the strange great sins of
them

That made the wine-press froth and foam
with wine.

For I was of Christ's choosing, I God's
knight,
No blinkard heathen stumbling for scant
light;
I can well see, for all the dusty days
Gone past, the clean great time of goodly
fight.

I smell the breathing battle sharp with
blows,
With shriek of shafts and snapping short
of bows;
The fair pure sword smites out in subtle
ways,
Sounds and long lights are shed between
the rows

Of beautiful mailed men; the edged light
slips,
Most like a snake that takes short breath
and dips
Sharp from the beautifully bending head,
With all its gracious body lithe as lips

That curl in touching you; right in this
wise
My sword doth, seeming fire in mine own
eyes,
Leaving all colors in them brown and red
And flecked with death; then the keen
breaths like sighs,

The caught-up choked dry laughers follow-
ing them,
When all the fighting face is grown a flame
For pleasure, and the pulse that stuns
the ears,
And the heart's gladness of the goodly
game.

Let me think yet a little: I do know
These things were sweet, but sweet such
years ago,
Their savor is all turned now into tears;
Yea, ten years since, where the blue rip-
ples blow.

The blue curled eddies of the blowing
Rhine,
I felt the sharp wind shaking grass and
vine

Touch my blood, too, and sting me with
delight
Through all this waste and weary body of
mine

That never feels clear air; right gladly then
I rode alone, a great way off my men,
And heard the chiming bridle snite and
smite.
And gave each rhyme thereof some rhyme
again,

Till my song shifted to that iron one;
Seeing there rode up between me and the
sun
Some certain of my foe's men, for his
three
White wolves across their painted coats did
run.

The first red-bearded, with square cheeks—
alack,
I made my knave's blood turn his beard to
black;

The slaying of him was a joy to see:
Perchance too, when at night he came not
back,

Some woman fell a-weeping, whom this
thief
Would beat when he had drunken; yet
small grief

Hath any for the ridding of such knaves;
Yea, if one wept, I doubt her teen was
brief.

This bitter love is sorrow in all lands,
Draining of eyelids, wringing of drenched
hands,

Sighing of hearts and filling up of graves;
A sign across the head of the world he
stands,

As one that hath a plague-mark on his
brows;
Dust and spilt blood do track him to his
house
Down under earth; sweet smells of lip and
cheek,
Like a sweet snake's breath made more
poisonous

With chewing of some perfumed deadly
grass,
Are shed all round his passage if he pass,

And their quenched savor leaves the
whole soul weak,
Sick with keen guessing whence the per-
fume was.

As one who hidden in deep sedge and reeds
Smells the rare scent made where a panther
feeds,
And tracking ever slotwise the warm
smell
Is snapped upon by the sweet mouth and
bleeds,

His head far down the hot sweet throat of
her—
So one tracks love, whose breath is deadlier,
And lo, one spring⁶ and you are fast in
hell,
Fast as the gin's grip of a wayfarer.

I think now, as the heavy hours de cease
One after one, and bitter thoughts increase
One upon one, of all sweet finished things;
The breaking of the battle; the long peace

Wherein we sat clothed softly, each man's
hair
Crowned with green leaves beneath white
hoods of vair;
The sounds of sharp spears at great
tourneyings,
And noise of singing in the late sweet air.

I sang of love too, knowing nought thereof;
"Sweeter," I said, "the little laugh of
love

Than tears out of the eyes of Magdalen,
Or any fallen feather of the Dove.

"The broken little laugh that spoils a kiss,
The ache of purple pulses, and the bliss
Of blinded eyelids that expand again--
Love draws them open with those lips of
his,

"Lips that cling hard till the kissed face
has grown
Of one same fire and color of their own;
Then ere one sleep, appeased with
sacrifice,
Where his lips wounded, there his lips
atone."

I sang these things long since and knew
them not;

"Lo, here is love, or there is love, God
wot,
This man and that finds favor in his
eyes,"
I said, "but I, what guerdon have I got?"

"The dust of praise that is blown every-
where
In all men's faces with the common air;
The bay-leaf that wants chafing to be
sweet
Before they wind it in a singer's hair."

So that one dawn I rode forth sorrowing;
I had no hope but of some evil thing,
And so rode slowly past the windy wheat,
And past the vineyard and the water-spring,

Up to the Horsel. A great elder-tree
Held back its heaps of flowers to let me
see
The ripe tall grass, and one that walked
therein,
Naked, with hair shed over to the knee.

She walked between the blossom and the
grass;
I knew the beauty of her, what she was,
The beauty of her body and her sin,
And in my flesh the sin of hers, alas!

Alas! for sorrow is all the end of this.
O sad kissed mouth, how sorrowful it is!
O breast whereat some suckling sorrow
clings,
Red with the bitter blossom of a kiss!

Ah, with blind lips I felt for you, and
found
About my neck your hands and hair en-
wound,
The hands that stifle and the hair that
stings,
I felt them fasten sharply without sound.

Yea, for my sin I had great store of bliss
Rise up, make answer for me, let thy kiss
Seal my lips hard from speaking of my
sin,
Lest one go mad to hear how sweet it is.

Yet I waxed faint with fume of barren
bowers,

And murmuring of the heavy-headed hours;
And let the dove's beak fret and peck
within
My lips in vain, and Love shed fruitless
flowers.

So that God looked upon me when your
hands
Were hot about me; yea, God brake my
bands
To save my soul alive, and I came forth
Like a man blind and naked in strange
lands.

That hears men laugh and weep, and
knows not whence
Nor wherefore, but is broken in his sense;
Howbeit I met folk riding from the north
Towards Rome, to purge them of their
souls' offence.

And rode with them, and spake to none;
the day
Stunned me like lights upon some wizard
way,
And ate like fire mine eyes and mine
eyesight;

So rode I, hearing all these chant and pray,

And marvelled; till before us rose and fell
White cursed hills, like outer skirts of hell
Seen where men's eyes look through the
day to night,
Like a jagged shell's lips, harsh, untunable,

Blown in between by devils' wrangling
breath;
Nathless we won well past that hell and
death,
Down to the sweet land where all airs
are good,
Even unto Rome where God's grace tarrieth.

Then came each man and worshipped at his
knees
Who in the Lord God's likeness bears the
keys
To bind or loose, and called on Christ's
shed blood,
And so the sweet-souled father gave him
ease.

But when I came . . . fell down at his feet,
Saying, "Father, though the Lord's blood
be right sweet,

The spot it takes not off the panther's
skin,
Nor shall an Ethiop's stain be bleached with
it.

"Lo, I have sinned and have spat out at
God,
Wherefore his hand is heavier and his rod
More sharp because of mine exceeding
sin,
And all his raiment redder than bright
blood.

"Before mine eyes ; yea, for my sake I wot
The heat of hell is waxen seven times hot
Through my great sin." Then spake he
some sweet word,
Giving me cheer ; which thing availed me
not ;

Yea, scarce I wist if such indeed were said ;
For when I ceased—lo, as one newly dead
Who hears a great cry out of hell, I heard
The crying of his voice across my head.

"Until this dry shred staff, that hath no
whit
Of leaf nor bark, bear blossom and smell
sweet,
Seek thou not any mercy in God's sight
For so long shalt thou be cast out from it."

Yea, what if dried-up stems wax red and
green,
Shall that thing be which is not nor has
been ?

Yea, what if sapless bark was green and
white,
Shall any good fruit grow upon my sin ?

Nay, though sweet fruit were plucked of a
dry tree,
And though men drew sweet waters of the
sea,

There should not grow sweet leaves on
this dead stem,
This waste wan body and shaken soul of
me.

Yea, though God search it warily enough,
There is not one sound thing in all thereof ;
Though he search all my veins through,
searching them
He shall find nothing whole therein but
love.

For I came home right heavy, with small
cheer,
And lo my love, mine own soul's heart,
more dear

Than mine own soul, more beautiful
than God,
Who hath my being between the hands of
her—

Fair still, but fair for no man saving me,
As when she came out of the naked sea
Making the foam as fire whereon she
trod,
And as the inner flower of fire was she.

Yea, she laid nold upon me, and her mouth
Clove unto mine as soul to body doth,
And, laughing, made her lips luxurious ;
Her hair had smells of all the sunburnt
south,

Strange spice and flower, strange savor of
crushed fruit
And perfume the swart kings tread under-
foot
For pleasure when their minds wax
amorous,
Charred frankincense and grated sandal-
root.

And I forgot fear and all weary things,
All ended prayers and perished thanks-
givings,
Feeling her face with all her eager hair
Cleave to me, clinging as a fire that clings

To the body and to the raiment, burning
them ;
As after death I know that such-like flame
Shall cleave to me for ever ; yea, what
care,
Albeit I burn then, having felt the same ?

Ah love, there is no better life than this ;
To have known love, how bitter a thing it is,
And afterward be cast out of God's sight ;
Yea, these that know not, shall they have
such bliss

High up in barren heaven before his face
As we twain in the heavy-hearted place,
Remembering love and all the dead de-
light,
And all that time was sweet with for a
space ?

For till the thunder in the trumpet be,
Soul may divide from body, but not we
One from another; I ho'd thee with my
hand,
I let mine eyes have all their will of thee,

I seal myself upon thee with my might,
Abiding alway out of all men's sight
Until God loosen over sea and land
The thunder of the trumpets of the night,
EXPLICIT LAUS VENERIS.

PHÆDRA.

HIPPOLYTUS; PHÆDRA: CHORUS OF TRÆZENIAN WOMEN.

HIPPOLYTUS.

LAY not thine hand upon me; let me go;
Take off thine eyes that put the gods to
shame;
What, wilt thou turn my loathing to thy
death?

PHÆDRA,

Nay, I will never loosen hold nor breathe
Till thou have slain me; godlike for great
brows
Thou art, and thewed as gods are, with
clear hair:
Draw now thy sword and smite me as thou
art god,
For verily I am smitten of other gods,
Why not of thee?

CHORUS.

O queen, take heed of words;
Why wilt thou eat the husk of evil speech?
Wear wisdom for that veil about thy head
And goodness for the binding of thy brows.

PHÆDRA.

Nay, but this god hath cause enow to smite;
If he will slay me, baring breast and
throat,
I lean toward the stroke with silent mouth
And a great heart. Come, take thy sword
and slay;
Let me not starve between desire and death,
But send me on my way with glad wet lips;
For in the vein-drawn ashen-colored palm
Death's hollow hand holds water of sweet
draught

To dip and slake dried mouths at, as a deer
Specked red from thorns laps deep and
loses pain.

Yea, if my mine own blood ran upon my
mouth,

I would drink that. Nay, but be swift
with me;

Set thy sword here between the girdle and
breast

For I shall grow a poison if I live.

Are not my cheeks as grass, my body pale,
And my breath like a dying poisoned man's?

O whatsoever of godlike names thou be,
By thy chief name I charge thee, thou
strong god,

And bid thee slay me. Strike, up to the
gold,

Up to the hand-grip of the hilt; strike
here;

For I am Cretan of my birth; strike now;
For I am Theseus' wife; stab up to the rims,
I am born daughter to Pasiphae.

See thou spare not for greatness of my
blood,

Nor for the shining letters of my name:

Make thy sword sure inside thine hand and
smite,

For the bright writing of my name is black,
And I am sick with hating the sweet sun.

HIPPOLYTUS

Let not this woman wail and cleave to me,
That am no part of the god's wrath with
her;

Loose ye her hands from me lest she take
hurt.

CHORUS.

Lady, this speech and majesty are twain;
Pure shame is of one counsel with the gods.

HIPPLYTUS.

Man is as beast when shame stands off
from him,

PHÆDRA.

Man, what have I to do with shame or
thee?

I am not of one counsel with the gods.
I am their kin, I have strange blood in me,
I am not of their likeness nor of thine:

My veins are nixed, and therefore am I
mad,

Yea therefore chafe and turn on mine own
flesh,

Half a woman made with half a god.
But thou wast hewn out of an iron womb
And fed with molten mother-snow for
milk.

A sword was nurse of thine; Hippolyta,
That had the spear to father, and the axe
To bridesman, and wet blood of sword-
slain men

For wedding-water out of a noble well,
Even she did bear thee, thinking of a sword,
And thou wast made a man mistakingly.

Nay, for I love thee, I will have thy hands,
Nay, for I will not loose thee, thou art
sweet,

Thou art my son, I am thy father's wife,
I ache toward thee with a bridal blood,
The pulse is heavy in all my married veins,
My whole face beats, I will feed full of
thee,

My body is empty of ease, I will be fed,
I am burnt to the bone with love, thou
shalt not go,

I am heartsick, and mine eyelids prick
mine eyes,

Thou shalt not sleep nor eat nor say a
word

Till thou hast slain me. I am not good to
live.

CHORUS.

This is an evil born with all its teeth,
When love is cast out of the bound of love.

HIPPLYTUS.

There is no hate that is so hateworthy

PHÆDRA.

I pray thee turn that hate of thine my way,
I hate not it nor anything of thine.

Lo, maidens, how he burns about the brow,
And draws the chafing sword-strap down
his hand.

What wilt thou do? wilt thou be worse
than death?

Be but as sweet as is the bitterest,
The most dispiteous out of all the gods,
I am well pleased. Lo, do I crave so
much?

I do but bid thee be unmerciful,
Even the one thing thou art. Pity me not:
Thou wert not quick to pity. Think of me
As of a thing thy hounds are keen upon
In the wet woods between the windy ways,
And slay me for a spoil. This body of
mine

Is worth a wild beasts fell or hide of hair,
And spotted deeper than a panther's grain.
I were but dead if thou wert pure indeed;
I pray thee by thy cold green holy crown
And by the fillet-leaves of Artemis.

Nay, but thou wilt not. Death is not like
thee,

Albeit men hold him worst of all the gods,
For of all gods Death only loves not gifts,*
Nor with burnt-offering nor blood-sacrifice
Shalt thou do aught to get thee grace of
him;

He will have nought of altar and altar-song,
And from him only of all the lords in
heaven

Persuasion turns a sweet averted mouth.
But thou art worse: from thee with baffled
breath

Back on my lips my prayer falls like a blow,
And beats upon them, dumb. What shall
I say?

There is no word I can compel thee with
To do me good and slay me. But take
heed;

I say, be wary; look between thy feet,
Lest a snare take them though the ground
be good.

HIPPLYTUS.

Shame may do most where fear is found
most weak:

* Æsch. Fr. Niobe :—

μόνος θεῶν γὰρ θάνατος οὐ δῶρων ἐργῶ, κ.
τ. λ.

That which for shame's sake yet I have not
done,
Shall it be done for fears? Take thine own
way;
Better the foot slip than the whole soul
swerve

PHÆDRA.

The man is choice and exquisite of mouth;
Yet in the end a curse shall curdle it.

CHORUS.

He goes with cloak upgathered to the lip,
Holding his eye as with some ill in sight.

PHÆDRA.

A bitter ill he hath i' the way thereof,
And it shall burn the sight out as with fire.

CHORUS.

Speak no such word whereto mischance is
kin

PHÆDRA.

Out of my heart and by fate's leave I speak.

CHORUS.

Set not thy heart to follow after fate.

PHÆDRA.

O women, O sweet people of this land,
O goodly city and pleasant ways thereof,
And woods with pasturing grass and great
well-heads,
And hills with light and night between
your leaves,
And winds with sound and silence in your
lips,
And earth and water and all immortal
things,

I take you to my witness what I am.
There is a god about me like as fire,
Sprung whence, who knoweth, or who
hath heart to say?

A god more strong than whom slain beasts
can soothe,

Or honey, or any spilth of blood-like wine,
Nor shall one please him with a whitened
brow

Nor wheat nor wool nor aught of plaited
leaf.

For like my mother am I stung and slain,
And round my cheeks have such red
malady

And on my lips such fire and foam as hers.
This is that Ate out of Amathus
That breeds up death and gives it one for
love.

She hath slain mercy, and for dead mercy's
sake
(Being frightened with this sister that was
slain)

Flees from before her fearful-footed shame,
And will not bear the bending of her brows
And long soft arrows flown from under
them

As from bows bent. Desire flows out of
her

As out of lips doth speech: and over her
Shines fire, and round her and beneath her
fire.

She hath sown pain and plague in all our
house,

Love loathed of love, and mates unmatch-
able,

Wild wedlock, and the lusts that bleat or
low,

And marriage-fodder snuffed about of kine.

Lo how the heifer runs with leaping flank
Sleek under shaggy and speckled lies of
hair,

And chews a horrible lip, and with harsh
tongue

Laps alien froth and licks a loathlier mouth.

Alas, a foul first steam of trodden tares,

And fouler of these late grapes underfoot.

A bitter way of waves and clean-cut foam
Over the sad road of sonorous sea

The high gods gave king Theseus for no
love,

Nay, but for love, yet to no loving end.

Alas the long thwarts and the fervent oars,

And blown hard sails that straightened the
scant rope!

There were no strong pools in the hollow
sea

To drag at them and suck down side and
beak,

No wind to catch them in the teeth and
hair,

No shoal, no shallow among the roaring
reefs,

No gulf whereout the straining tides throw
spars,

No surf where white bones twist like
whirled white fire

But like to death he came with death, and sought And slew and spoiled and gat him that he would. For death, for marriage, and for child- getting, I set my curse against him as a sword; Yea, and the severed half thereof I leave Pittheus, because he slew not (when that face Was tender, and the life still soft in it)	The small swathed child, but bred him for my fate. I would I had been the first that took her death Out from between wet hoofs and reddened teeth, Splashed horns, fierce fetlocks of the brother bull! For now shall I take death a deadlier way; Gathering it up between the feet of love Or off the knees of murder reaching it,
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THE TRIUMPH OF TIME.

BEFORE our lives divide for ever, While time is with us and hands are free, (Time, swift to fasten and swift to sever Hand from hand, as we stand by the sea) I will say no word that a man might say Whose whole life's love goes down in a day; For this could never have been; and never, Though the gods and the years relent, shall be. Is it worth a tear, is it worth an hour, To think of things that are well outworn? Of fruitless husk and fugitive flower, The dream foregone and the deed for- borne? Though joy be done with and grief be vain, Time shall not sever us wholly in twain; Earth is not spoilt for a single shower; But the rain has ruined the ungrown corn. It will grow not again, this fruit of my heart, Smitten with sunbeams, ruined with rain, The singing seasons divide and depart Winter and summer depart in twain. It will grow not again, it is ruined at root, The bloodlike blossom, the dull red fruit; Though the heart yet sickens, the lips yet smart, With sullen savor of poisonous pain.	I have given no man of my fruit to eat; I trod the grapes, I have drunken the wine. Had you eaten and drunken and found it sweet, This wild new growth of the corn and vine, This wine and bread without lees or leaven. We had grown as gods, as the gods in heaven, Souls fair to look upon, goodly to greet, One splendid spirit, your soul and mine. In the change of years, in the coil of things, In the clamor and rumor of life to be We, drinking love as the furthest springs. Covered with love at a covering tree, We had grown as gods, as the gods above, Filled from the heart to the lips with love, Held fast in his hands, clothed warm with his wings, O love, my love had you loved but me! We had stood as the sure stars stand, and moved As the moon moves, loving the world; and seen Grief collapse as a thing disproved, Death consume as a thing unclean, Twain halves of a perfect heart, made fast, Soul to soul while the years fell past;
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Had you loved me once, as you have not
loved;

Had the chance been with us that has
not been.

I have put my days and dreams out of mind,
Days that are over, dreams that are done.
Though we seek life through, we shall
surely find

There is none of them clear to us now,
not one.

But clear are these things; the grass and
the sand,

Where, sure as the eyes reach, ever at hand,
With lips wide open and face burnt blind,
The strong sea-daisies feast on the sun.

The low downs lean to the sea; the stream,
One loose thin pulseless tremulous vein,
Rapid and vivid and dumb as a dream,

Works downward, sick of the sun and
the rain;

No wind is rough with the rank rare
flowers;

The sweet sea, mother of loves and hours,
Shudders and shines as the grey winds
gleam,

Turning her smile to a fugitive pain.

Mother of loves that are swift to fade,
Mother of mutable winds and hours.

A barren mother, a mother-maid,
Cold and clean as her faint salt flowers.

I would we twain were even as she,
Lost in the night and the light of the sea,
Where faint sounds falter and wan beams
wade,

Break, and are broken, and shed into
showers.

The loves and hours of the life of a man,
They are swift and sad, being born of
the sea.

Hours that rejoice and regret for a span,
Born with a man's breath, mortal as he;
Loves that are lost ere they come to birth,
Weeds of the wave, without fruit upon
earth.

I lose what I long for, save what I can,
My love, my love, and no love for me!

It is not much that a man can save
On the sands of life, in the straits of time,
Who swims in sight of the great third
wave

That never a swimmer shall cross or
climb.

Some waif washed up with the strays and
spars

That ebb-tide shows to the shore and the
stars;

Weed from the water, grass from a grave.
A broken blossom, a ruined rhyme,

There will no man do for your sake, I
think,

What I would have done for the least
word said.

I had wrung life dry for your lips to drink,
Broken it up for your daily bread :

Body for body and blood for blood,
As the flow of the full sea risen to flood

That yearns and trembles before it sink,
I had given, and lain down for you, glad
and dead.

Yea, hope at highest and all her fruit,
And time at fullest and all his dower,

I had given you surely, and life to boot,
Were we once made one for a single
hour.

But now, you are twain, you are cloven
apart,

Flesh of his flesh, but heart of my heart;
And deep in one is the bitter root,
And sweet for one is the lifelong flower.

To have died if you cared I should die for
you, clung

To my life if you bade me, played my
part

As it pleased you—these were the thoughts
that stung,

The dreams that smote with a keener
dart

Than shafts of love or arrows of death;
These were but as fire is, dust or breath,

Or poisonous foam on the tender tongue
Of the little snakes that eat my heart.

I wish we were dead together to-day,

Lost sight of, hidden away out of sight,
Clasped and clothed in the cloven clay,

Out of the world's way, out of the light,
Out of the ages of worldly weather,

Forgotten of all men altogether,
As the world's first dead, taken wholly
away.

Made one with death, filled full of the
night.

How we should slumber, how we should sleep,

Far in the dark with the dreams and the dews!

And dreaming, grow to each other, and weep,

Laugh low, live softly, murmur and muse;
Yea, and it may be, struck through by the dream,

Feel the dust quicken and quiver, and seem
Alive as of old to the lips, and leap
Spirit to spirit as lovers use.

Sick dreams and sad of a dull delight;

For what shall it profit when men are dead

To have dreamed, to have loved with the whole soul's might,

To have looked for day when the day was fled?

Let come what will, there is one thing worth,

To have had fair love in the life upon earth:

To have held love safe till the day grew night,

While skies had color and lips were red.

Would I lose you now? would I take you then,

If I lose you now that my heart has need?

And come what may after death to men,

What thing worth this will the dead years breed?

Lose life, lose all; but at least I know,

O sweet life's love, having loved you so,

Had I reached you on earth, I should lose not again,

In death nor life, nor in dream or deed.

Yea, I know this well: were you once sealed mine,

Mine in the blood's beat, mine in the breath,

Mixed into me as honey in wine,

Not time that sayeth and gainsayeth,
Nor all strong things had severed us then;

Not wrath of gods, nor wisdom of men,

Nor all things earthly, nor all divine,

Nor joy nor sorrow, nor life nor death.

I had grown pure as the dawn and the dew,

• You had grown strong as the sun or the sea.

But none shall triumph a whole life through:

For death is one, and the fates are three.

At the door of life, by the gate of breath,

There are worse things waiting for men than death;

Death could not sever my soul and you,

As these have severed your soul from me.

You have chosen and clung to the chance they sent you,

Life sweet as perfume and pure as prayer.

But will it not one day in heaven repent you?

Will they solace you wholly, the days that were?

Will you lift up your eyes between sadness and bliss,

Meet mine, and see where the great love is,
And tremble and turn and be changed?

Content you;

The gate is strait; I shall not be there.

But you, had you chosen, had you stretched hand,

Had you seen good such a thing were done,

I too might have stood with the souls that stand

In the sun's sight, clothed with the light of the sun;

But who now on earth need care how I live?

Have the high gods anything left to give,

Save dust and laurels and gold and sand?

Which gifts are goodly; but I will none.

O all fair lovers about the world,

There is none of you, none, that shall comfort me,

My thoughts are as dead things, wrecked and whirled

Round and round in a gulf of the sea;

And still, through the sound and the straining stream,

Through the coil and chafe, they gleam in a dream,

The bright fine lips so cruelly curled,

And strange swift eyes where the soul sits free.

Free, without pity, withheld from woe,

Ignorant; fair as the eyes are fair,

Would I have you change now, change at a blow,

Startled and stricken, awake and aware?

Yea, if I could, would I have you see
My very love of you filling me,
And know my soul to the quick, as I know
The likeness and look of your throat and
hair?

I shall not change you. Nay, though I
might,
Would I change my sweet one love with
a word?

I had rather your hair should change in a
night,

Clear now as the plume of a black bright
bird;

Your face fail suddenly, cease, turn grey,
Die as a leaf that dies in a day.

I will keep my soul in a place out of sight,
Far off, where the pulse of it is not heard.

Far off it walks, in a bleak blown space,
Full of the sound of the sorrow of years.

I have woven a veil for the weeping face,
Whose lips have drunken the wine of
tears;

I have found a way for the failing feet,
A place for slumber and sorrow to meet;
There is no rumor about the place,
Nor light, nor any that sees or hears.

I have hidden my soul out of sight, and
said

"Let none take pity upon thee, none
Comfort thy crying: for lo, thou art dead
Lie still now, safe out of sight of the sun.
Have I not built thee a grave, and wrought
Thy grave-clothes on thee of grievous
thought.

With soft spun verses and tears unshed,
And sweet light visions of things undone?

"I have given thee garments and balm
and myrrh,

And gold, and beautiful burial things.
But thou, be at peace now, make no stir;
Is not thy grave as a royal king's?
Fret not thyself though the end were sore;
Sleep, be patient, vex me no more.
Sleep; what hast thou to do with her?

The eyes that weep, with the mouth that
sings?"

Where the dead red leaves of the years lie
rotten,

The cold old crimes and the deeds thrown
by,

The misconceived and the misbegotten,
I would find a sin to do ere I die,
Sure to dissolve and destroy me all through,
That would set you higher in heaven, serve
you

And leave you happy, when clean forgot-
ten,
As a dead man out of mind, am I.

Your lithe hands draw me, your-face burns
through me;

I am swift to follow you, keen to see;
But love lacks might to redeem or undo me,
As I have been, I know I shall surely be;
"What should such fellows as I do?"

Nay,
My part were worse if I chose to play;
For the worst is this after all; if they knew
me,

Not a soul upon earth would pity me.

And I play not for pity of these; but you,
If you saw with your soul what man
am I,

You would praise me at least that my soul
all through

Clove to you, loathing the lives that lie;
The souls and lips that are bought and sold,
The smiles of silver and kisses of gold,
The lapdog loves that whine as they chew,
The little lovers that curse and cry.

There are fairer women, I hear; that may
be,

But I, that I love you and find you fair,
Who are more than fair in my eyes if they
be,

Do the high gods know or the great
gods care?

Though the swords in my heart for one
were seven,

Would the iron hollow of doubtful heaven,
That knows not itself whether night-time
or day be,

Reverberate words and a foolish prayer?

I will go back to the great sweet mother,
Mother and lover of men, the sea.

I will go down to her, I and none other,
Close with her, kiss her and mix her
with me;

Cling to her, strive with her, hold her fast;
O fair white mother, in days long past
Born without sister, born without brother,
Set free my soul as thy soul is free.

O fair green-girdled mother of mine,
 Sea, that art clothed with the sun and
 the rain,
 Thy sweet hard kisses are strong like wine,
 Thy large embraces are keen like pain.
 Save me and hide me with all thy waves,
 Find me one grave of thy thousand graves,
 Those pure cold populous graves of thine,
 Wrought without hand in a world with-
 out stain.

I shall sleep, and move with the moving
 ships,
 Change as the winds change, veer in the
 tide;
 My lips will feast on the foam of thy lips,
 I shall rise with thy rising, with thee
 subside;
 Sleep, and not know if she be, if she were,
 Filled full with life to the eyes and hair,
 As a rose is fulfilled to the roseleaf tips
 Wrought without hand in a world with-
 out stain.

This woven raiment of nights and days,
 Were it once cast off and unwound from
 me,
 Naked and glad would I walk in thy ways,
 Alive and aware of thy ways and thee;
 Clear of the whole world, hidden at home,
 Clothed with the green and crowned with
 the foam,
 A pulse of the life of thy straits and bays,
 A vein in the heart of the streams of the
 sea.

Fair mother, fed with the lives of men,
 Thou art subtle and cruel of heart, men
 say
 Thou hast taken, and shalt not render
 again;
 Thou art full of thy dead, and cold as
 they.
 But death is the worst that comes of thee;
 Thou art fed with our dead, O mother, O
 sea,
 But when hast thou fed on our hearts? or
 when,
 Having given us love, hast thou taken
 away?

O tender-hearted, O perfect lover,
 Thy lips are bitter, und sweet thine heart.
 The hopes that hurt and the dreams that
 hover,

Shall they not vanish away and apart?
 But thou, thou art sure, thou art older than
 earth;
 Thou art strong for death and fruitful of
 birth;
 Thy depths conceal and thy gulfs discover;
 From the first thou wert; in the end thou
 art.

And grief shall endure not for ever, I know.
 As things that are not shall these things
 be;
 We shall live through seasons of sun and
 of snow,
 And none be grievous as this to me.
 We shall hear, as one in a trance that
 hears,
 The sound of time, the rhyme of the years,
 Wrecked hope and passionate pain will
 grow
 As tender things of a spring-tide sea.

Sea-fruit that swings in the waves that hiss,
 Drowned gold and purple and royal
 rings.
 And all times past, was it all for this?
 Times forgotten, and treasures of
 things?
 Swift years of liking, and sweet long laugh-
 ter,
 That wist not well of the years thereafter
 Till love woke, smitten at heart by a kiss,
 With lips that trembled and trailing
 wings?

There lived a singer in France of old,
 By the tideless dolorous midland sea.
 In a land of sand and ruin and gold
 There shone one woman, and none but
 she.
 And finding life for her love's sake fail,
 Being fain to see her, he bade set sail,
 Touched land, and saw her as life grew
 cold,
 And praised God, seeing; and so died he.

Died, praising God for his gift and grace:
 For she bowed down to him weeping,
 and said
 "Live;" and her tears were shed on his
 face
 Or over the life in his face was shed.
 The sharp tears fell through her hair, and
 stung

Once, and her close lips touched him and
clung

Once, and grew one with his lips for a
space;

And so drew back, and the man was
dead.

O brother, the gods were good to you.

Sleep, and be glad while the world en-
dures.

Be well content as the years wear through;
Give thanks for life, and the loves and
lures;

Give thanks for life, O brother, and death,
For the sweet last sound of her feet, her
breath,

For gifts she gave you, gracious and few,
Tears and kisses, that lady of yours.

Rest and be glad of the gods; but I,

How shall I praise them, or how take
rest?

There is not room under all the sky

For me that know not of worst or best,

Dream or desire of the days before,

Sweet things or bitterness, any more.

Love will not come to me now though I
die,

As love came close to you, breast to
breast.

I shall never be friends again with roses;

I shall loathe sweet tunes, where a note
grown strong

Relents and recoils, and climbs and closes,

As a wave of the sea turned back by
song.

There are sounds where the soul's delight
takes fire,

Face to face with its own desire;

A delight that rebels, a desire that reposes,

I shall hate sweet music my whole life
long.

The pulse of war and passion of wonder,

The heavens that murmur, the sounds
that shine,

The stars that sing and the loves that
thunder,

The music burning at heart like wine,

An armed archangel whose hands raise up

All senses mixed up in the spirit's cup

Till flesh and spirit are molten in sunder—

These things are over, and no more mine.

These were a part of the playing I heard

Once, ere my love and my heart were at
strife;

Love that sings and hath wings as a bird,

Balm of the wound and heft of the knife,

Fairer than earth is the sea, and sleep

Than overwatching of eyes that weep,

Now time has done with his one sweet
word,

The wine and leaven of lovely life.

I shall go my ways, tread out my measure,

Fill the days of my daily breath

With fugitive things not good to treasure,

Do as the world doth, say as it saith;

But if we had loved each other—O sweet,
Had you felt, lying under the palms of
your feet,

The heart of my heart, beating harder with
pleasure

To feel you tread it to dust and death—

Ah, had I not taken my life up and given

All that life gives and the years let go,

The wine and honey, the balm and leaven,

The dreams reared high and the hopes
brought low?

Come life, come death, not a word be said;

Should I lose you living, and vex you dead?

I never shall tell you on earth; and in
heaven

If I cry to you then, will you hear or
know?

LES NOYADES.

WHATEVER a man of the sons of men
 Shall say to his heart of the lords above,
 They have shown man verily, once and
 again,
 Marvellous mercies and infinite love.

In the wild fifth year of the change of
 things,
 When France was glorious and blood-
 red, fair
 With dust of battle and deaths of kings,
 A queen of men, with helmeted hair;

Carrier came down to the Loire and slew,
 Till all the ways and the waves waxed
 red:

Bound and drowned, slaying two by two,
 Maidens and young men, naked and wed.
 They brought on a day to his judgment-
 place

One rough with labor and red with fight,
 And a lady noble by name and face,
 Faultless, a maiden, wonderful, white.

She knew not, being for shame's sake blind,
 If his eyes were hot on her face hard by.
 And the judge bade strip and ship them,
 and bind

Bosom to bosom to drown and die.

The white girl winced and whitened; but
 he

Caught fire, waxed bright as a great
 bright flame

Seen with thunder far out on the sea,
 Laughed hard as the glad blood went
 and came.

Twice his lips quailed with delight, then
 said,

"I have but a word to you all, one word
 Bear with me; surely I am but dead;"

And all they laughed and mocked him
 and heard.

"Judge, when they open the judgment-
 roll,

I will stand upright before God and pray:
 'Lord God, have mercy on one man's soul,
 For his mercy was great upon earth, I
 say.

" 'Lord, if I loved thee—Lord, if I
 served—

If these who darkened thy son's fair face
 I fought with, sparing none, nor swerved
 A hand's-breadth, Lord, in the perilous
 place—

" 'I pray thee say to this man, O Lord,
Sit thou for him at my feet on a throne.

I will face thy wrath, though it bite as a
 sword,
 And my soul shall burn for his soul and
 atone.

" 'For Lord, thou knowest, O God most
 wise,

How gracious on earth were his deeds
 toward me.
 Shall this be a small thing in thine eyes,
 That is greater in mine than the whole
 great sea ?

"I have loved this woman my whole life
 long,

And even for love's sake when have I
 said

'I love you?' when have I done you
 wrong,

Living? but now I shall have you dead.

"Yea, now, do I bid you love me. love ?
 Love me or loathe, we are not one twain.

But God be praised in his heaven above
 For this my pleasure and that my pain !

"For never a man, being mean like me,
 Shall die like me till the whole world
 dies.

I shall drown with her, laughing for love ; and she Mix with me, touching me, lips and eyes. “Shall she not know me and see me all through, Me, on whose heart as a worm she trod? You have given me, God requite it you, What man yet never was given of God.” O sweet one love, O my life's delight, Dear, though the days have divided us, Lost beyond hope, taken far out of sight. Not twice in the world shall the gods do thus. Had it been so hard for my love? but I, Though the gods gave all that a god can give, I had chosen rather the gift to die, Cease, and be glad above all that live.	For the Loire would have driven us down to the sea, And the sea would have pitched us from shoal to shoal; And I should have held you, and you held me, As flesh holds flesh, and the soul the soul. Could I change you, help you to love me, sweet, Could I give you the love that would sweeten death, We should yield, go down, locked hands and feet, Die, drown together, and breath catch breath; But you would have felt my soul in a kiss, And known that once if I loved you well; And I would have given my soul for this To burn for ever in burning hell
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A LEAVE-TAKING.

LET us go hence, my songs; she will not hear. Let us go hence together without fear; Keep silence now, for singing-time is after And over all old things and all things dear. She loves not you nor me as all we love her. Yea, though we sang as angels in her ear, She would not hear. Let us rise up and part; she will not know. Let us go seaward as the great winds go, Full of blown sand and foam; what help is there? There is no help, for all these things are so, And all the world is bitter as a tear. And how these things are, though ye strove to show, She would not know.	Let us go home and hence; she will not weep, We gave love many dreams and days to keep, Flowers without scent, and fruits that would not grow, Saying, ‘If thou wilt, thrust in thy sickle and reap.’ All is reaped now; no grass is left to mow; And we that sowed, though all we fell on sleep, She would not weep. Let us go hence and rest; she will not love. She shall not hear us if we sing hereof, Nor see love's ways, how sore they are and steep. Come hence, let be, lie still; it is enough.
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Love is a barren sea, bitter and deep;
 And though she saw all heaven in flower
 above,
 She would not love.

Let us give up, go down; she will not care.
 Though all the stars made gold of all the air,
 And the sea moving saw before it move
 One moon-flower making all the foam-
 flowers fair;
 Though all those waves went over us, and
 drove
 Deep down the stifling lips and drowning
 hair
 She would not care.

Let us go hence, go hence; she will not
 see.
 Sing all once more together: surely she,
 She too, remembering days and words that
 were,
 Will turn a little toward us, sighing; but
 we,
 We are hence, we are gone, as though we
 had not been there.
 Nay, and though all men seeing had pity
 on me,
 She would not see.

ITYLUS.

SWALLOW, my sister, O sister swallow,
 How can thine heart be full of the spring?
 A thousand summers are over and
 dead.

What hast thou found in the spring to follow?
 What hast thou found in thine heart to
 sing?
 What wilt thou do when the summer is
 shed?

O swallow, sister, O fair swift swallow,
 Why wilt thou fly after spring to the
 south,

The soft south whither thine heart is
 set?

Shall not the grief of the old time follow?
 Shall not the song thereof cleave to thy
 mouth?

Hast thou forgotten ere I forget?

Sister, my sister, O fleet sweet swallow,
 Thy way is long to the sun and the south;
 But I, fulfilled of my heart's desire,
 Shedding my song upon height, upon
 hollow,

From tawny body and sweet small mouth
 Feed the heart of the night with fire.

I the nightingale all spring through,
 O swallow, sister, O changing swallow,
 All spring through till the spring be done,
 Clothed with the light of the night on the
 dew,

Sing, while the hours and the wild birds
 follow;

Take flight and follow and find the
 sun.

Sister, my sister, O soft light swallow,
 Though all things feast in the spring's
 guest-chamber,

How hast thou heart to be glad there-
 of yet?

For where thou fliest I shall not follow,
 Till life forget and death remember,
 Till thou remember and I forget.

Swallow, my sister, O singing swallow,
 I know not how thou hast heart to sing.
 Hast thou the heart? is it all past over?

Thy lord the summer is good to follow,
And fair the feet of thy lover the spring:
But what wilt thou say to the spring
thy lover?

O swallow, sister, O fleeting swallow,
My heart in me is a molten ember
And over my head the waves have met.
But thou wouldst tarry or I would follow,
Could I forget or thou remember,
Couldst thou remember and I forget.

O sweet stray sister, O shifting swallow
The heart's division divideth us.
Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree;
But mine goes forth among sea-gulfs hollow
To the place of the slaying of Itylus,
The feast of Daulis, the Thracian sea.

O swallow, sister, O rapid swallow,
I pray thee sing not a little space.
Are not the roofs and the lintels wet?
The woven web that was plain to follow,
The small slain body, the flower-like
face,
Can I remember if thou forget?

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten!
The hands that cling and the feet that
follow,
The voice of the child's blood crying
yet

*Who hath remembered me? who hath for-
gotten?*

Thou hast forgotten, O summer swallow,
But the world shall end when I forget.

ANACTORIA.

τίνοσ' αὖ τὸ πειθοῖ
μάψ σαγηνεύσας φιλότατα;

SAPPHO.

My life is bitter with thy love; thine eyes
Blind me, thy tresses burn me, thy sharp
sighs

Divide my flesh and spirit with soft sound,
And my blood strengthens, and my veins
abound.

I pray thee sigh not, speak not, draw not
breath;

Let life 'burn down, and dream it is not
death.

I would the sea had hidden us, the fire
(Wilt thou fear that, and fear not my de-
sire?)

Severed the bones that bleach, the flesh
that cleaves,

And let our sifted ashes drop like leaves.

I feel thy blood against my blood: my pain
Pains thee, and lips bruise lips, and vein
stings vein.

Let fruit be crushed on fruit, let flower on
flower.

Breast kindle breast, and either burn one
hour.

Why wilt thou follow lesser loves? are
thine

Too weak to bear these hands and lips of
mine?

I charge thee for my life's sake, O too sweet
To crush love with thy cruel faultless feet,

I charge thee keep thy lips from hers or his,
Sweetest, till theirs be sweeter than my
kiss.

Lest I too lure, a swallow for a dove,
 Erotion or Erinna to my love.
 I would my love could kill thee; I am
 satiated
 With seeing thee live, and fain would have
 thee dead.
 I would earth had thy body as fruit to eat,
 And no mouth but some serpent's found
 thee sweet.
 I would find grievous ways to have thee
 slain,
 Intense device, and superflux of pain;
 Vex thee with amorous agonies, and shake
 Life at thy lips, and leave it there to ache;
 Strain out thy soul with pangs too soft to
 kill,
 Intolerable interludes, and infinite ill;
 Relapse and reluctance of the breath,
 Dumb tunes and shuddering semitones of
 death.
 I am weary of all thy words and soft
 strange ways,
 Of all love's fiery nights and all his days,
 And all the broken kisses salt as brine
 That shuddering lips make moist with
 waterish wine,
 And eyes the bluer for all those hidden
 hours
 That pleasure fills with tears and feeds
 from flowers,
 Fierce at the heart with fire that half comes
 through,
 But all the flower-like white-stained round
 with blue;
 The fervent underlid, and that above
 Lifted with laughter or abashed with love;
 Thine amorous girdle, full of thee and fair,
 And leavings of the lilies in thine hair.
 Yea, all sweet words of thine and all thy
 ways,
 And all the fruit of nights and flower of
 days,
 And stinging lips wherein the hot sweet
 brine
 That love was born of burns and foams
 like wine,
 And eyes insatiable of amorous hours,
 Fervent as fire and delicate as flowers,
 Colored like night at heart, but cloven
 through
 Like night with flame, dyed round like
 night with blue,
 Clothed with deep eyelids under and
 above—
 Yea, all thy beauty sickens me with love;

Thy girdle empty of thee and now not fair,
 And ruinous lilies in thy languid hair.
 Ah, take no thought for love's sake; shall
 this be,
 And she who loves thy lover not love thee?
 Sweet soul, sweet mouth of all that laughs
 and lives,
 Mine is she, very mine; and she forgives.
 For I beheld in sleep the light that is
 In her high place in Paphos, heard the kiss
 Of body and soul that mix with eager tears
 And laughter stinging through the eyes and
 ears;
 Saw love, as burning flame from crown to
 feet,
 Imperishable, upon her storied seat;
 Clear eyelids lifted toward the north and
 south,
 A mind of many colors and a mouth
 Of many tunes and kisses; and she bowed,
 With all her subtle face laughing aloud,
 Bowed down upon me, saying, "Who
 doth the wrong,
 Sappho?" but thou—thy body is the song,
 Thy mouth the music; thou art more than I,
 Though my voice die not till the whole
 world die;
 Though men that hear it madden; though
 love weep,
 Though nature change, though shame be
 charmed to sleep.
 Ah, wilt thou slay me lest I kiss thee dead?
 Yet the queen laughed from her sweet heart
 and said:
 "Even she that flies shall follow for thy
 sake,
 And she shall give thee gifts that would not
 take,
 Shall kiss that would not kiss thee" (yea,
 kiss me)
 "When thou wouldst not"—when I would
 not kiss thee!
 Ah, more to me than all men as thou art,
 Shall not my songs assuage her at the
 heart?
 Ah, sweet to me as life seems sweet to
 death,
 Why should her wrath fill thee with fear-
 ful breath?
 Nay, sweet, for is she God alone? hath she
 Made earth and all the centuries of the sea,
 Taught the sun ways to travel, woven most
 fine
 The moonbeams, shed the starbeams forth
 as wine,

Bound with her myrtles, beaten with her
rods,
The young men and the maidens and the
gods?
Have we not lips to love with, eyes for
tears,
And summer and flower of women and of
years?
Stars for the foot of morning, and for noon
Sunlight, and exaltation of the moon;
Waters that answer waters, fields that wear
Lilies, and languor of the Lesbian air?
Beyond those flying feet of fluttered doves,
Are there not other gods for other loves?
Yea, though she scourge thee, sweetest,
for my sake,
Blossom not thorns, and flowers not blood
should break.
Ah that my lips were tuneless lips, but
pressed
To the bruised blossom of thy scourged
white breast!
Ah that my mouth for Muses' milk were
fed
On the sweet blood thy sweet small wounds
had bled!
That with my tongue I felt them, and could
taste
The faint flakes from thy bosom to the
waist!
That I could drink thy veins as wine, and
eat
Thy breasts like honey! that from face to
feet
Thy body were abolished and consumed,
And in my flesh thy very flesh entombed!
Ah, ah, thy beauty! like a beast it bites,
Stings like an adder, like an arrow smites,
Ah sweet, and sweet again, and seven times
sweet,
The paces and the pauses of thy feet!
Ah sweeter than all sleep or summer air
The fallen fillets fragrant from thine hair!
Yea, though their alien kisses do me wrong,
Sweeter thy lips than mine with all their
song;
Thy shoulders whiter than a fleece of white,
And flower-sweet fingers good to bruise or
bite
As honeycomb of the inmost honey-cells,
With almond-shaped and rose-leaf colored
shells,
And blood like purple blossom at the tips
Quivering; and pain made perfect in thy
lips

C

For my sake when I hurt thee; O that I
Durst crush thee out of life with love, and
die,
Die of thy pain and my delight, and be
Mixed with thy blood and molten into thee!
Would I not plague thee dying overmuch?
Would I not hurt thee perfectly? not touch
Thy pores of sense with torture, and make
bright
Thine eyes with bloodlike tears and grievous
light
Strike pang from pang as note is struck
from note,
Catch the sob's middle music in thy throat.
Take thy limbs living, and new-mould with
these
A lyre of many faultless agonies?
Feed thee with fever and famine and fine
drouth,
With perfect pangs convulse thy perfect
mouth,
Make thy life shudder in thee and burn
afresh,
And wring thy very spirit through the
flesh?
Cruel? but love makes all that love him
well
As wise as heaven and crueller than hell.
Me hath love made more bitter toward
thee
Than death toward man; but were I made
as he
Who hath made all things to break them
one by one,
If my feet trod upon the stars and sun
And souls of men as his have always trod,
God knows I might be crueller than God.
For who shall change with prayers or
thanksgivings
The mystery of the cruelty of things?
Or say what God above all gods and years,
With offering and blood-sacrifice of tears,
With lamentation from strange lands from
graves
Where the snake pastures, from scared
mouths of slaves,
From prison, and from plunging prows of
ships
Through flame like foam of the sea's closing
lips—
With thwartings of strange signs, and
wind-blown hair
Of comets, desolating the dim air,
When darkness is made fast with seals and
bars,

And fierce reluctance of disastrous stars,
Eclipse, and sound of shaken hills, and
wings

Darkening, and blind inexpiable things—
With sorrow of laboring moons, and alter-
ing light

And travail of the planets of the night,
And weeping of the weary Pleiads seven,
Feeds the mute melancholy lust of heaven?
Is not this incense bitterness, his meat
Murder? his hidden face and iron feet
Hath not man known, and felt them on
their way

Threaten and 'rample all things and every
day?

Hath he not sent us hunger? who hath
cursed

Spirit and flesh with longing? filled with
thirst

Their lips who cried unto him? who bade
exceed

The fervid will, fall short the feeble deed,
Bade sink the spirit and the flesh aspire,
Pain animate the dust of dead desire,
And life yield up her flower to violent fate?
Him would I reach, him smite, him dese-
crate,

Pierce the cold lips of God with human
breath,

And mix his immortality with death.

Why hath he made us? what had all we
done

That we should live and loathe the sterile
sun,

And with the moon wax paler as she wanes,
And pulse by pulse feel time grow through
our veins?

Thee too the years shall cover; thou shalt
be

As the rose born of one same blood with
thee,

As a song sung, as a word said, and fall
Flower-wise, and be not any more at all,
Nor any memory of thee anywhere;
For never Muse has bound above thine hair
The high Pierian flower whose graft out-
grows

All summer kinship of the mortal rose
And colour of deciduous days, nor shed
Reflex and flush of heaven about thine
head,

Nor reddened brows made pale by floral
grief

With splendid shadow from that lordlier
leaf.

Yea, thou shalt be forgotten like spilt wine,
Except these kisses of my lips on thine
Brand them with immortality; but me—
Men shall not see bright fire nor hear the
sea,

Nor mix their hearts with music, nor be-
hold

Cast forth of heaven with feet of awful
gold

And plumeless wings that make the bright
air blind,

Lightning with thunder for a hound behind
Hunting through fields unfurrowed and un-
sown—

But in the light and laughter, in the moan
And music, and in grasp of lip and hand
And shudder of water that makes felt on
land

The immeasurable tremor of all the sea,
Memories shall mix and metaphors of me.
Like me shall be the shuddering calm of
night,

When all the winds of the world for pure
delight

Close lips that quiver and fold up wings
that ache;

When nightingales are louder for love's
sake,

And leaves tremble like lute-strings or like
fire;

Like me the one star swooning with desire
Even at the cold lips of the sleepless moon,
As I at thine; like me the waste white
noon,

Burnt through with barren sunlight; and
like me

The land-stream and the tide-stream in the
sea.

I am sick with time as these with ebb and
flow,

And by the yearning in my veins I know
The yearning sound of waters; and mine
eyes

Burn as that beamless fire which fills the
skies

With troubled stars and travelling things of
flame;

And in my heart the grief consuming them
Labors, and in my veins the thirst of these,
And all the summer travail of the trees

And all the winter sickness; and the earth
Filled full with deadly works of death and
birth,

Sore spent with hungry lusts of birth and
death,

Has pain like mine in her divided breath ;
 Her spring of leaves is barren, and her fruit
 Ashes ; her boughs are burdened, and her root
 Fibrous and gnarled with poison; underneath
 Serpents have gnawn it through with tortuous teeth
 Made sharp upon the bones of all the dead,
 And wild birds rend her branches overhead.
 These, woven as raiment for his word and thought,
 These hath God made, and me as these, and wrought
 Song, and hath lit it at my lips; and me
 Earth shall not gather though she feed on thee.
 As a shed tear shalt thou be shed; but I—
 Lo, earth may labor, men live long and die,
 Years change and stars, and the high God devise
 New things, and old things wane before his eyes
 Who wields and wrecks them, being more strong than they—
 But, having made me, me he shall not slay.
 Nor slay nor satiate, like those herds of his
 Who laugh and live a little, and their kiss content
 them, and their loves are swift and sweet,
 And sure death grasps and gains them with slow feet,
 Love they or hate they, strive or bow their knees—
 And all these end; he hath his will of these.
 Yea, but albeit he slay me, hating me—
 Albeit he hide me in the deep dear sea
 And cover me with cool wan foam, and ease
 This soul of mine as any soul of these,
 And give me water and great sweet waves, and make
 The very sea's name lordlier for my sake,
 The whole sea sweeter—albeit I die indeed
 And hide myself and sleep and no man heed,
 O! me the high God hath not all his will.
 Blossom of branches, and on each high hill
 Clear air and wind, and under in clamorous vales
 Fierce noises of the fiery nightingales,
 Buds burning in the sudden spring like fire,

The wan washed sand and the waves' vain desire,
 Sails seen like blown white flowers at sea, and words
 That bring tears swiftest, and long notes of birds
 Violently singing till the whole world sings—
 I Sappho shall be one with all these things,
 With all high things for ever; and my face
 Seen once, my songs once heard in a strange place,
 Cleave to men's lives, and waste the days thereof
 With gladness and much sadness and long love.
 Yea, they shall say, earth's womb has borne in vain
 New things, and never this best thing again;
 Borne days and men, borne fruits and wars and wine,
 Seasons and songs, but no song more like mine.
 And they shall know me as ye who have known me here,
 Last year when I loved Atthis, and this year
 When I love thee; and they shall praise me, and say
 "She hath all time as all we have our day,
 Shall she not live and have her will"—even I?
 Yea, though thou diest, I say I shall not die.
 For these shall give me of their souls, shall give
 Life, and the days and loves wherewith I live,
 Shall quicken me with loving, fill with breath,
 Save me and serve me, strive for me with death.
 Alas, that neither moon nor snow nor dew
 Nor all cold things can purge me wholly through,
 Assuage me nor allay me nor appease,
 Till supreme sleep shall bring me bloodless ease;
 Till time wax faint in all his periods;
 Till fate undo the bondage of the gods,
 And lay, to slake and satiate me all through,
 Lotus and Lethe on my lips like dew,
 And shed around and over and under me
 Thick darkness and the insuperable sea.

HYMN TO PROSERPINE.

(AFTER THE PROCLAMATION IN ROME OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.)

Vicisti, Galilæe.

I HAVE lived long enough, having seen one thing, that love hath an end ; Goddess and maiden and queen, be near me now and befriend. Thou art more than the day or the morrow, the seasons that laugh or that weep ; For these give joy and sorrow ; but thou, Proserpina, sleep. Sweet is the treading of wine, and sweet the feet of the dove ; But a goodlier gift is thine than foam of the grapes or love. Yea, is not even Apollo, with hair and harpstring of gold, A bitter God to follow, a beautiful God to behold ? I am sick of singing ; the bays burn deep and chafe : I am fain To rest a little from praise and grievous pleasure and pain. For the Gods we know not of, who give us our daily breath, We know they are cruel as love or life, and lovely as death. O Gods dethroned and deceased, cast forth, wiped out in a day ! From your wrath is the world released, redeemed from your chains, men say. New Gods are crowned in the city, their flowers have broken your rods ; They are merciful, clothed with pity, the young compassionate Gods. But for me their new device is barren, the days are bare ; Things long past over suffice, and men forgotten that were. Time and the Gods are at strife: ye dwell in the midst thereof, Draining a little life from the barren breasts of love. I say to you, cease, take rest ; yea, I say to you all, be at peace,	Till the bitter milk of her breast and the barren bosom shall cease. Wilt thou yet take all, Galilcan ? but these thou shalt not take, The laurel, the palms and the pæan, the breast of the nymphs in the brake ; Breasts more soft than a dove's, that tremble with tenderer breath ; And all the wings of the Loves, and all the joy before death ; All the feet of the hours that sound as a single lyre, Dropped and deep in the flowers, with strings that flicker like fire. More than these wilt thou give, things fairer than all these things ? Nay, for a little we live, and life hath mutable wings. A little while and we die ; shall life not thrive as it may ? For no man under the sky lives twice, outliving his day. And grief is a grievous thing, and a man hath enough of his tears : Why should he labour, and bring fresh grief to blacken his years ? Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean ; the world has grown grey from thy breath ; We have drunken of things Lethean, and fed on the fulness of death. Laurel is green for a season, and love is sweet for a day ; But love grows bitter with treason, and laurel outlives not May. Sleep, shall we sleep after all ? for the world is not sweet in the end ; For the old faiths loosen and fall, the new years ruin and rend. Fate is a sea without shore, and the soul is a rock that abides : But her ears are vexed with the roar and her face with the foam of the tides.
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O lips that the live blood faints in, the
 leavings of racks and rods !
 O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of
 gibbeted Gods !
 Though all men abase them before you in
 spirit, and all knees bend,
 I kneel not neither adore you, but stand-
 ing, look to the end.
 All delicate days and pleasant, all spirits
 and sorrows are cast
 Far out with the foam of the present that
 sweeps to the surf of the past :
 Where beyond the extreme sea-wall, and
 between the remote sea-gates,
 Waste water washes, and tall ships founder,
 and deep death waits :
 Where, mighty with deepening sides, clad
 about with the seas as with wings,
 And impelled of invisible tides, and ful-
 filled of unspeakable things,
 White-eyed and poisonous finned, shark-
 toothed and serpentine-curved,
 Rolls, under the whitening wind of the
 future, the wave of the world.
 The depths stand naked in sunder behind
 it, the storms flee away ;
 In the hollow before it the thunder is taken
 and snared as a prey ;
 In its sides is the north-wind bound ; and
 its salt is of all men's tears ;
 With light of ruin, and sound of changes,
 and pulse of years :
 With travail of day after day, and with
 trouble of hour upon hour ;
 And bitter as blood is the spray ; and the
 crests are as fangs that devour :
 And its vapor and storm of its steam as the
 sighing of spirits to be ;
 And its noise as the noise in a dream ; and
 its depth as the roots of the sea :
 And the height of its heads as the height of
 the utmost stars of the air :
 And the ends of the earth at the might
 thereof tremble, and time is made bare.
 Will ye bridle the deep sea with reins, will
 ye chasten the high sea with rods ?
 Will ye take her to chain her with chains,
 who is older than all ye Gods ?
 All ye as a wind shall go by, as a fire shall
 ye pass and be past ;
 Ye are Gods, and behold ye shall die, and
 the waves be upon you at last.
 In the darkness of time, in the deeps of the
 years, in the changes of things,
 Ye shall sleep as a slain man sleeps, and
 the world shall forget you for kings.

Though the feet of thine high priests tread
 where thy lords and our forefathers trod,
 Though these that were Gods are dead, and
 thou being dead art a God,
 Though before thee the throned Cytherian
 be fallen, and hidden her head,
 Yet thy kingdom shall pass, Galilean, thy
 dead shall go down to thee dead.
 Of the maiden thy mother, men sing as a
 goddess with grace clad around ;
 Thou art throned where another was king :
 where another was queen she is crowned.
 Yea, once we had sight of another : but now
 she is queen, say these.
 Not as thine, not as thine was our mother,
 a blossom of flowering seas,
 Clothed round with the world's desire as
 with raiment, and fair as the foam,
 And fleetier than kindled fire, and a goddess,
 and mother of Rome.
 For thine came pale and a maiden, and
 sister to sorrow ; but ours,
 Her deep hair heavily laden with odour and
 color of flowers,
 White rose of the rose-white water, a silver
 splendor, a flame,
 Bent down unto us that besought her, and
 earth grew sweet with her name.
 For thine came weeping, a slave among
 slaves, and rejected ; but she
 Came flushed from the full-flushed wave,
 and imperial, her foot on the sea,
 And the wonderful waters knew her, the
 winds and the viewless ways,
 And the roses grew rosier, and bluer the
 sea-blue stream of the bays.
 Ye are fallen, our lords by what token ? we
 wist that ye should not fall.
 Ye were all so fair that are broken ; and
 one more fair than ye all.
 But I turn to her still, having seen she
 shall surely abide in the end ;
 Goddess and maiden and queen, be near
 me now and befriend.
 O daughter of earth, of my mother, her
 crown and blossom of birth,
 I am also, I also, thy brother ; I go as I
 came unto earth.
 In the night where thine eyes are as moons :
 are in heaven, the night where thou art,
 Where the silence is more than all tunes,
 where sleep overflows from the heart,
 Where the poppies are sweet as the rose in
 our world, and the red rose is white,
 And the wind falls faint as it blows with
 the fume of the flowers of the night,

And the murmur of spirits that sleep in the
 shadow of Gods from afar
 Grows dim in thine ears and deep as the
 deep dim soul of a star,
 In the sweet low light of thy face, under
 heavens untrod by the sun,
 Let my soul with their souls find place, and
 forget what is done and undone.
 Thou art more than the Gods who number
 the days of our temporal breath;
 For these give labor and slumber; but thou,
 Proserpina, death.

Therefore now at thy feet I abide for a
 season in silence. I know
 I shall die as my fathers died, and sleep as
 they sleep; even so.
 For the glass of the years is brittle wherein
 we gaze for a span;
 A little soul for a little bears up this corpse
 which is man.*
 So long I endure, no longer; and laugh not
 again, neither weep.
 For there is no God found stronger than
 death; and death is a sleep.

ILICET.

THERE is an end of joy and sorrow;
 Peace all day long, all night, all morrow,
 But never a time to laugh or weep.
 The end is come of pleasant places,
 The end of tender words and faces,
 The end of all, the popped sleep.

No place for sound within their hearing,
 No room to hope, no time for fearing,
 No lips to laugh, no lids for tears.
 The old years have run out all their measure;
 No chance of pain, no chance of pleasure,
 No fragment of the broken years.

Outside of all the worlds and ages,
 There where the fool is as the sage is,
 There where the slayer is clean of blood,
 No end, no passage, no beginning,
 There where the sinner leaves off sinning,
 There where the good man is not good.

There is not one thing with another,
 But Evil saith to Good: My brother,
 My brother, I am one with thee:
 They shall not strive nor cry forever;
 No man shall chose between them: never
 Shall this thing end and that thing be.

Wind wherein seas and stars are shaken
 Shall shake them, and they shall not waken;

None that has lain down shall arise;
 The stones are sealed across their places;
 One shadow is shed on all their faces,
 One blindness cast on all their eyes.

Sleep, is it sleep perchance that covers
 Each face, as each face were his lover's?
 Farewell; as men that sleep fare well.
 The grave's mouth laughs unto derision
 Desire and dread and dream and vision,
 Delight of heaven and sorrow of hell.

No soul shall tell nor lip shall number
 The names and tribes of you that slumber;
 No memory, no memorial.
 "Thou knowest"—who shall say thou
 knowest?

There is none highest and none lowest:
 An end, an end, an end of all.

Good night, good sleep, good rest from
 sorrow,

These that shall not have good morrow;
 The gods be gentle to all these.

Nay, if death be not, how shall they be?
 Nay, is there help in heaven? it may be
 All things and lords of things shall cease.

* ψυχάριον εἰ βαστάζον νεκρόν.

The stooped urn, filling, dips and flashes;
 The bronzed brims are deep in ashes;
 The pale old lips of death are fed.
 Shall this dust gather flesh hereafter?
 Shall one shed tears or fall to laughter,
 At sight of all these poor old dead?

Nay, as thou wilt; these know not of it;
 Thine eyes' strong weeping shall not profit,
 Thy laughter shall not give thee ease;
 Cry aloud, spare not, cease not crying,
 Sigh, till thou cleave thy sides with sighing,
 Thou shalt not raise up one of these.

Burnt spices flash, and burnt wines hisses,
 The breathing flame's mouth curls and
 kisses

The small dried rows of frankincense;
 All round the sad red blossoms smoulder,
 Flowers colored like the fire, but colder,
 In sign of sweet things taken hence;

Yea, for their sake and in death's favor
 Things of sweet shape and of sweet savor
 We yield them, spice and flower of wine;
 Yea, costlier things than wine or spices,
 Whereof none knoweth how great the price
 is,
 And fruit that comes not of the vine.

From boy's pierced throat and girl's pierced
 bosom
 Drips, reddening round the blood-red
 blossoms,
 The slow delicious bright soft blood,
 Bathing the spices and the pyre,
 Bathing the flowers and fallen fire,
 Bathing the blossom by the bud.

Roses whose lips the flame had deadened
 Drink till the lapping leaves are reddened
 And warm wet inner petals weep;
 The flower whereof sick sleep gets leisure,
 Barren of halm and purple pleasure,
 Fumes with no native steam of sleep.

Why will ye weep? what do ye weeping?
 For walking folk and people sleeping,
 And sands that fill and sands that fall,
 The days rose-red, the popped hours,
 Blood, wine, and spice and fire and flowers,
 There is one end of one and all.

Shall such an one lend love or borrow?
 Shall these be sorrow for thy sorrow?

Shall these give thanks for words or
 breath?

Their hate is as their loving-kindness;
 The frontlet of their brows is blindness,
 The armlet of their arms is death.

Lo, for no noise or light of thunder
 Shall these grave-clothes be rent in sunder,
 He that hath taken, shall he give?
 He hath rent them: shall he bind to-
 gether?
 He hath bound them: shall he break the
 tether?
 He hath slain them: shall he bid them live?

A little sorrow, a little pleasure,
 Fate metes us from the dusty measure
 That holds the date of all of us;
 We are born with travail and strong crying,
 And from the birth-day to the dying
 The likeness of our life is thus.

One girds himself to serve another,
 Whose father was the dust, whose mother
 The little dead worm therein;
 They find no fruit of things they cherish?
 The goodness of a man shall perish,
 It shall be one thing with his sin.

In deep wet ways by grey old gardens
 Fed with sharp spring the sweet fruit har-
 dens;
 They know not what fruits wane or grow;
 Red summer burns to the utmost ember;
 They know not, neither can remember,
 The old years and flowers they used to
 know.

Ah, for their sakes, so trapped and taken,
 For theirs, forgotten and forsaken,
 Watch, sleep not, gird thyself with prayer.
 Nay, where the heart of wrath is broken,
 Where long love ends as a thing spoken,
 How shall thy crying enter there?

Though the iron sides of the old world falter
 The likeness of them shall not alter
 For all the rumor of periods,
 The stars and seasons that come after
 The tears of latter men, the laughter
 Of the old unalterable gods.

Far up above the years and nations,
 The high gods, clothed and crowned with
 patience,

Endure through days of death-like date;
 They bear the witness of things hidden;
 Before their eyes all life stands chidden,
 As they before the eyes of Fate.

Not for their love shall Fate retire,
 Nor they relent for our desire,

Nor the graves open for their call.
 The end is more than joy and anguish,
 Than lives that laugh and lives that languish,
 The popped sleep, the end of all

HERMAPHRODITUS.

I.

LIFT up thy lips, turn round, look back for
 love,
 Blind love that comes by night and casts
 out rest;

Or all things tired thy lips look weariest,
 Save the long smile that they are wearied
 of.

Ah sweet, albeit no love be sweet enough,
 Choose of two loves and cleave unto the
 best;

Two loves at either blossom of thy breast
 Strive until one be under and one above.
 Their breath is fire upon the amorous air,
 Fire in thine eyes and where thy lips sus-
 pire:

And whosoever hath seen thee, being so
 fair,

Two things turn all his life and blood to
 fire;

A strong desire begot on great despair,
 A great despair cast out by strong desire.

II.

Where between sleep and life some brief
 space is,

With love like gold bound round about
 the head,

Sex to sweet sex with lips and limbs
 wed,

Turning the fruitful feud of hers and his

To the waste wedlock of a sterile kiss;

Yet from them something like as fire is
 shed

That shall not be assuaged till death be
 dead,

Though neither life nor sleep can find out
 this.

Love made himself of flesh that perisheth
 A pleasure-house for all the loves his kin;
 But on the one side sat a man like death,
 And on the other a woman sat like sin.
 So with veiled eyes and sobs between his
 breath

Love turned himself and would not enter
 in.

III.

Love, is it love or sleep or shadow or light
 That lies between thine eyelids and thine
 eyes?

Like a flower laid upon a flower it lies,
 Or like the night's dew laid upon the night.
 Love stands upon thy left hand and thy
 right,

Yet by no sunset and by no moonrise
 Shall make thee man and ease a woman's
 sighs,

Or make thee woman for a man's delight.
 To what strange end hath some strange
 god made fair

The double blossom of two fruitless
 flowers?

Hid love in all the folds of all thy hair,

Fed thee on summers, watered thee with
showers,
Given all the gold that all the seasons wear
To thee that art a thing of barren hours?

IV.

Yea, love, I see; it is not love but fear.
Nay, sweet, it is not fear but love, I
know;
Or wherefore should thy body's blossom
blow
So sweetly, or thine eyelids leave so clear
Thy gracious eyes that never made a tear
Though for their love our tears like blood
should flow,

Though love and life and death should
come and go,
So dreadful, so desirable, so dear?
Yea, sweet, I know; I saw in what swift
wise

Beneath the woman's and the water's
kiss

Thy moist limbs melted into Salmacis,
And the large light turned tender in thine
eyes,

And all thy boy's breath softened into
sighs;

But Love being blind, how should he
know of this?

Au Musée du Louvre, Mars 1863.

FRAGOLETTA.

O LOVE! what shall be said of thee?
The son of grief begot by joy?
Being sightless, wilt thou see?
Being sexless, wilt thou be
Maiden or boy?

I dreamed of strange lips yesterday
And cheeks wherein the ambiguous blood
Was like a rose's—yea
A rose's when it lay
Within the bud.

What fields have bred thee, or what groves
Concealed thee, O mysterious flower,
O double rose of Love's,
With leaves that lure the doves
From bud to bower?

I dare not kiss it, lest my lip
Press harder than an indrawn breath,
And all the sweet life slip
Forth, and the sweet leaves drip,
Bloodlike, in death.

O sole desire of my delight!
O sole delight of my desire!
Mine eyelids and eyesight
Feed on thee day and night
Like lips of fire.

Lean back thy throat of carven pearl,
Let thy mouth murmur like the dove's;
Say, Venus hath no girl,
No front of female curl,
Among her Loves.

Thy sweet low bosom, thy close hair,
Thy strait soft flanks and slenderer feet,
Thy virginal strange air,
Are these not over fair
For Love to greet?

How should he greet thee? what new name,
Fit to move all men's hearts, could move
Thee, deaf to love or shame,
Love's sister, by the same
Mother as Love?

Ah, sweet, the maiden's mouth is cold,
 Her breast-blossoms are simply red,
 Her hair mere brown or gold,
 Fold over simple fold
 Binding her head.

Thy mouth is made of fire and wine,
 Thy barren bosom takes my kiss
 And turns my soul to thine
 And turns thy lip to mine,
 And mine it is.

Thou hast a serpent in thine hair,
 In all the curls that close and cling;
 And ah, thy breast-flower!
 Ah love, thy mouth too fair
 To kiss and sting.

Cleave to me, love me, kiss mine eyes
 Sate thy lips with loving me;
 Nay, for thou shalt not rise;
 Lie still as Love that dies
 For love of thee.

Mine arms are close about thine head,
 My lips are fervent on thy face,
 And where my kiss hath fed
 Thy flower-like blood leaps red
 To the kissed place.

O bitterness of things too sweet
 O broken singing of the dove!
 Love's wings are over fleet,
 And like the panther's feet
 The feet of Love.

RONDEL.

THESE many years since we began to
 be,
 What have the gods done with us? what
 with me,
 What with my love? they have shown me
 fates and fears,
 Harsh springs, and fountains bitterer than
 the sea,
 Grief a fixed star, and joy a vane that
 veers,
 These many years.

With her, my love, with her have they
 done well?
 But who shall answer for her? who shall
 tell

Sweet things or sad, such things as no man
 hears?
 May no tears fall, if no tears ever fell,
 From eyes more dear to me than starriest
 spheres
 These many years.

But if tears ever touched, for any grief,
 Those eyelids folded like a white-rose leaf,
 Deep double shells where through the eye-
 flower peers,
 Let them weep once more only, sweet and
 brief,
 Brief tears and bright, for one who gave
 her tears
 These many years.

SATIA TE SANGUINE.

If you loved me ever so little,
 I could bear the bonds that gall,
 I could dream the bonds were brittle;
 You do not love me at all.

O beautiful lips, O bosom
 More white than the moon's and warm,
 A sterile, a ruinous blossom
 Is blown your way in a storm.

As the lost white feverish limbs
Of the Lesbian Sappho, adrift
In foam where the sea-weed swims,
Swam loose for the streams to lift.

My heart swims blind in a sea
That stuns me ; swims to and fro,
And gathers to windward and lee
Lamentation, and mourning, and woe.

A broken, an emptied boat,
Sea saps it, winds blow apart,
Sick and adrift and afloat,
The barren waif of a heart.

Where, when the gods would be cruel,
Do they go for a torture ? where
Plant thorns, set pain like a jewel ?
Ah, not in the flesh, not there !

The racks of earth and the rods
Are weak as foam on the sands ;
In the heart is the prey for gods,
Who crucify hearts, not hands.

Mere pangs corrode and consume,
Dead when life dies in the brain ;
In the infinite spirit is room
For the pulse of an infinite pain.

I wish you were dead, my dear ;
I would give you, had I to give,
Some death too bitter to fear ;
It is better to die than live.

I wish you were stricken of thunder
And burnt with a bright flame through,
Consumed and cloven in sunder,
I dead at your feet like you.

If I could but know after all,
I might cease to hunger and ache,
Though your heart were ever so small
If it were not a stone or a snake.

You are crueller, you that we love,
Than hatred, hunger, or death ;
You have eyes and breasts like a dove,
And you kill men's hearts with a breath.

As plague in a poisonous city
Insults and exults on her dead,
So you, when pallid for pity
Comes love, and fawns to be fed.

As a tame beast writhes and wheedles,
He fawns to be fed with wiles ;
You carve him a cross of needles,
And whet them sharp as your smiles.

He is patient of thorn and whip,
He is dumb under axe or dart ;
You suck with a sleepy red lip
The wet red wounds in his heart.

You thrill as his pulses dwindle,
You brighten and warm as he bleeds,
With insatiable eyes that kindle
And insatiable mouth that feeds.

Your hands nailed love to the tree,
You stript him, scourged him with rods,
And drowned him deep in the sea
That hides the dead and their gods.

And for all this, die will he not ;
There is no man sees him but I ;
You came and went and forgot ;
I hope he will some day die.

A LITANY.

ἐν οὐρανῷ φαεινὰς
κρύψω παρ' ὑμῖν αὐγὰς,
μίας πρὸ νυκτὸς ἑπτὰ νύκτας ἔξετε, κ τ λ.

Anth. Sac.

FIRST ANTIPHONE.

ALL the bright lights of heaven
I will make dark over thee ;

One night shall be as seven
That its skirts may cover thee ;
I will send on thy strong men a sword,

On thy remnant a rod;
Ye shall know that I am the Lord.
Saith the Lord God.

SECOND ANTIPHONE.

All the bright lights of heaven
Thou hast made dark over us;
One night has been as seven
That its skirts might cover us;
Thou hast sent on our strong men a sword,
On our remnant a rod;
We know that thou art the Lord,
O Lord our God.

THIRD ANTIPHONE.

As the reeses and wings of the wind
Are scattered and shaken,
I will scatter all them that have sinned,
There shall none be taken;
As a sower that scattered seed,
So wilt I scatter them;
As one breaketh and shattereth a reed,
I will break and shatter them.

FOURTH ANTIPHONE.

As the wings and the locks of the wind
Are scattered and shaken,
Thou hast scattered all them that have
sinned,
There was no man taken.
As a sower that scattereth seed,
So hast thou scattered us;
As one breaketh and shattereth a reed,
Thou hast broken and shattered us.

FIFTH ANTIPHONE.

From all thy lovers that love thee
I God will sunder thee;
I will make darkness above thee,
And thick darkness under thee.
Before me goeth a light,
Behind me a sword.
Shall a remnant find grace in my sight?
I am the Lord.

SIXTH ANTIPHONE.

From all our lovers that love us
Thou god didst sunder us
Thou madest darkness above us,
And thick darkness under us;
Thou hast kindled thy wrath for a light,
And made ready thy sword.

Let a remnant find grace in thy sight,
We beseech thee, O Lord.

SEVENTH ANTIPHONE.

Wilt thou bring fine gold for a payment
For sins on this wise?
For the glittering of raiment
And the shining of eyes,
For the painting of faces
And the sundering of trust,
For the sins of thine high places
And delight of thy lust?

For your high things ye shall have lowly,
Lamentation for song;
For, behold, I God am holy,
I the Lord am strong;
Ye shall seek me and shall not reach me
Till the wine-press be trod;
In that hour ye shall turn and beseech me
Saith the Lord God.

EIGHTH ANTIPHONE.

Not with fine gold for a payment,
But with coin of sighs
But with rending of raiment
And with weeping of eyes,
But with shame of stricken faces
And with strewing of dust
For the sin of stately places
And lordship of lust;

With voices of men made 'ow'
Made empty of song,
O Lord God most holy,
O God most strong,
We reach out hands to reach thee
Ere the wine-press be trod;
We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee
O Lord our God.

NINTH ANTIPHONE.

In that hour thou shalt say to the night,
Come down and cover us;
To the cloud on thy left and thy right,
Be thou spread over us;
A snare shall be as thy mother,
And a curse thy bride;
Thou shalt put her away, and another
Shall lie by thy side.

Thou shalt neither rise up by day
Nor lie down by night.

Would God it were dark ! thou shalt say;
 Would God it were light !
 And the sight of thine eyes shall be made
 As the burning of fire ;
 And thy soul shall be sorely afraid
 For thy soul's desire.

Ye whom your lords loved well,
 Putting silver and gold on you,
 The inevitable hell
 Shall surely take hold on you ;
 Your gold shall be for a token,
 Your staff for a rod ;
 With the breaking of bands ye are broken,
 Saith the Lord God.

TENTH ANTIPHONE.

In our sorrow we said to the night,
 Fall down and cover us ;
 To the darkness at left and at right,
 Be thou shed over us ;
 We had breaking of spirit to mother

And cursing to bride;
 And one was slain, and another
 Stood up at our side.

We could not arise by day,
 Nor lie down by night;
 Thy sword was sharp in our way,
 Thy word in our sight;
 The delight of our eyelids was made
 As the burning of fire,
 And our souls became sorely afraid
 For our soul's desire.

We whom the world loved well,
 Laying silver and gold on us,
 The kingdom of death and of hell
 Biseth up to take hold on us;
 Our gold is turned to a token,
 Our staff to a rod;
 Yet shalt thou bind them up that were
 broken
 O Lord our God.

[A LAMENTATION.

I.

Who hath known the ways of time
 Or trodden behind his feet ?
 There is no such man among men.
 For chance overcomes him; or crime
 Changes; for all things sweet
 In time wax bitter again.
 Who shall give sorrow enough,
 Or who the abundance of tears ?
 Mine eyes are heavy with love
 And a sword gone through mine ears,
 A sound like a sword and fire,
 For pity, for great desire;
 Who shall ensure me thereof,
 Lest I die, being full of my fears ?

Who hath known the ways and the wrath
 The sleepless spirit, the root
 And blossom of evil will,

The divine device of a god ?
 Who shall behold it or hath ?
 The twice-tongued prophets are mute,
 The many speakers are still;
 No foot has travelled or trod,
 No hand has meted, his path.
 Man's fate is a blood-red fruit,
 And the mighty gods have their fill
 And relax not the rein, or the rod.

Ye were mighty in heart from of old,
 Ye slew with the spear, and are slain.
 Keen after heat is the cold,
 Sore after summer is rain,
 And melteth man to the bone.
 As water he weareth away,
 As a flower, as an hour in a day,
 Fallen from laughter to moan.
 But my spirit is shaken with fear
 Lest an evil thing begin,

New-born, a spear for a spear,
 And one for another sin,
 Or ever our tears began,
 It was known from of old and said;
 One law for a living man,
 And another law for the dead.
 For these are fearful and sad,
 Vain, and things without breath;
 While he lives let a man be glad,
 For none hath joy of his death.

II.

Who hath known the pain, the old pain of
 earth,
 Or all the travail of the sea,
 The many ways and waves, the birth
 Fruitless, the labor nothing worth?
 Who hath known, who knoweth, O gods?
 not we.

There is none shall say he hath seen,
 There is none he hath known.
 Though he saith, Lo, a lord have I been,
 I have reaped and sown;
 I have seen the desire of mine eyes,
 The beginning of love,
 The season of kisses and sighs
 And the end thereof.
 I have known the ways of the sea,
 All the perilous ways;
 Strange winds have spoken with me,
 And the tongues of strange days.
 I have hewn the pine or ships;
 Where steeds run arow,
 I have seen from their oridled lips
 Foam blown as the snow,
 With snapping of chariot-poles
 And with straining of oars
 I have grazed in the race the goals,
 In the storm the shores;
 As a greave is cleft with an arrow
 At the joint of the knee,
 I have cleft through the sea-straits narrow
 To the heart of this sea.
 When air was smitten in sunder
 I have watched on high
 The ways of the stars and the thunder
 In the night of the sky;
 Where the dark brings forth light as a
 flower,
 As from lips that dis sever;
 One abideth the space of an hour,
 One endureth for ever.
 Lo, what hath he seen or known

Of the way and the wave
 Unbeholden, unsailed-on, unsown,
 From the breast to the grave?

Or ever the stars were made, or skies,
 Grief was born, and the kinless night,
 Mother of gods without form or name.
 And light is born out of heaven and dies,
 And one day knows not another's light,
 But night is one, and her shape the
 same.
 But dumb the goddesses underground
 Wait, and we hear not on earth if their
 feet
 Rise, and the night wax loud with
 their wings;
 Dumb, without word or shadow of sound;
 And sift in scales and winnow as wheat
 Men's souls, and sorrow of manifold
 things.

III.

Nor less of grief than ours
 The gods wrought long ago
 To bruise men one by one;
 But with the incessant hours
 Fresh grief and greener woe
 Spring, as the sudden sun
 Year after year makes flowers;
 And these die down and grow,
 And the next year lacks none.

As these men sleep, have slept
 The old heroes in time fled,
 No dream-divided sleep;
 And holier eyes have wept
 Than ours when on her dead
 Gods have seen Thetis weep,
 With heavenly hair far-swept
 Back, heavenly hands outspread
 Round what she could not keep.

Could not one day withhold,
 One night; and like as these
 White ashes of no weight,
 Held not his urn the cold
 Ashes of Heracles!
 For all things born one gate
 Opens, no gate of gold;
 Opens, and no man sees
 Beyond the gods and fate.

ANIMA ANCEPS

TILL death have broken
 Sweet life's love-token,
 Till all be spoken
 That shall be said,
 What dost thou praying,
 O soul, and playing
 With song and saying,
 Things flown and fled
 For this we know not—
 That fresh springs flow not
 And fresh grief grows not
 When men are dead;
 When strange years cover
 Lover and lover,
 And joys are over
 And tears are shed.

If one day's sorrow
 Mar the day's morrow—
 If man's life borrow
 And man's death pay—
 If souls once taken,
 If lives once shaken,
 Arise, awaken,
 By night, by day—

Why with strong crying
 And years of sighing,
 Living and dying,
 Fast ye and pray?
 For all your weeping,
 Waking and sleeping;
 Death comes to reaping
 And takes away.
 Though time rend after
 Roof-tree from rafter,
 A little laughter
 Is much more worth
 Than thus to measure
 The hour, the treasure,
 The pain, the pleasure,
 The death, the birth;
 Grief, when days alter,
 Like joy shall falter;
 Song-book and psalter,
 Mourning and mirth.
 Live like the swallow;
 Seek not to follow
 Where earth is hollow
 Under the earth.

IN THE ORCHARD.

(PROVENÇAL BURDEN.,)

LEAVE go my hands, let me catch breath
 and see;
 Let the dew-fall drench either side of me;
 Clear apple-leaves are soft upon that
 moon
 Seen sidelong like a blossom in the tree;
 Ah God, ah God, that day should be so
 soon.

The grass is thick and cool, it lets us
 lie.
 Kissed upon either cheek and either
 eye,
 I turn to thee as some green afternoon
 Turns toward sunset, and is loth to die;
 Ah God, ah God, that day should be so
 soon.

Lie closer, lean your face upon my side,
 Feel where the dew fell that has hardly
 dried,

Hear how the blood beats that went nigh
 to swoon;

The pleasure lives there when the sense
 has died;

Ah God, ah God, that day should be so
 soon.

O my fair lord, I charge you leave me this;
 Is it not sweeter than a foolish kiss?

Nay take it then, my flower, my first in
 June,

My rose, so like a tender mouth it is :

Ah God, ah God, that day should be so
 soon.

Love, till dawn sunder night from day
 with fire,

Dividing my delight and my desire,

The crescent life and love the plenilune,
 Love me though dusk begin and dark re-
 tire;

Ah God, ah God, that day should be so
 soon.

Ah, my heart fails my blood draws back ;
 I know,

When life runs over, life is near to go ;

And with the slain of love love's ways
 are strewn,

And with their blood, if love will have it
 so ;

Ah God, ah God, that day should be so
 soon.

Ah, do thy will now ; slay me if thou wilt;
 There is no building now the walls are
 built,

No quarrying now the corner-stone is
 hewn,

No drinking now the vine's whole blood is
 spilt ;

Ah God, ah God, that day should be so
 soon.

Nay, slay me now ; nay, for I will be slain;
 Pluck thy red pleasure from the teeth of
 pain,

Break down thy vine ere yet grape-
 gatherers prune,

Slay me ere day can slay desire again ;

Ah God, ah God, that day should be so
 soon.

Yea, with thy sweet lips, with thy sweet
 sword; yea,

Take life and all, for I will die, I say;

Love, I gave love, is life a better boon?
 For sweet night's sake I will not live till
 day;

Ah God, ah God, that day should be so
 soon.

Nay, I will sleep then only; nay, but go.

Ah sweet, too sweet to me, my sweet, I
 know

Love, sleep, and death go to the sweet
 same tune;

Hold my hair fast, and kiss me through
 it so.

Ah God, ah God, that day should be so
 soon.

A MATCH.)

If love were what the rose is,
 And I were like the leaf,
 Our lives would grow together
 In sad or singing weather,
 Blown fields or flowerful closes.
 Green pleasure or grey grief;
 If love were what the rose is,
 And I were like the leaf.

If I were what the words are,
 And love were like the tune,
 With double sound and single ;
 Delight our lips would mingle,
 With kisses glad as birds are
 That get sweet rain at noon;
 If I were what the words are
 And love were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,
 And I your love were death,
 We'd shine and snow together
 Ere March made sweet the weather
 With daffodil and starling
 And hours of fruitful breath;
 If you were life, my darling,
 And I your love were death.

If you were thrall to sorrow,
 And I were page to joy,
 We'd play for lives and seasons
 With loving looks and treasons
 And tears of night and morrow
 And laughs of maid and boy;
 If you were thrall to sorrow,
 And I were page to joy.

If you were April's lady,
 And I were lord in May,
 We'd throw with leaves for hours
 And draw for days with flowers,
 Till day like night were shady
 And night were bright like day;
 If you were April's lady,
 And I were lord in May.

If you were queen of pleasure,
 And I were king of pain,
 We'd hunt down love together,
 Pluck out his flying-feather,
 And teach his feet a measure,
 And find his mouth a rein,
 If you were queen of pleasure,
 And I were king of pain.

FAUSTINE.

Ave Faustina Imperatrix, morituri te salutant.

LEAN back, and get some minutes' peace;
 Let your head lean
 Back to the shoulder with its fleece
 Of locks, Faustine.

The shapely silver shoulder stoops,
 Weighed over clean
 With state of splendid hair that droops
 Each side, Faustine.

Let me go over your good gifts
 That crown you queen;
 A queen whose kingdom ebbs and shifts
 Each week, Faustine.

Bright heavy brow well gathered up:
 White gloss and sheen;
 Carved lips that make my lips a cup
 To drink, Faustine.

Wine and rank poison, milk and blood,
 Being mixed therein

Since first the devil threw dice with God
 For you, Faustine.

Your naked new-born soul, their stake,
 Stood blind between;
 God said "let him that wins her take
 And keep Faustine."

But this time Satan throve, no doubt;
 Long since, I ween,
 God's part in you was battered out;
 Long since, Faustine.

The die rang sideways as it fell,
 Rang cracked and thin,
 Like a man's laughter heard in hell
 Far down, Faustine.

A shadow of laughter like a sigh,
 Dead sorrow's kin;
 So rang, thrown down, the devil's die
 That won Faustine.

A suckling of his breed you were,
 One hard to wean;
 But God, who lost you, left you fair,
 We see, Faustine.

You have the face that suits a woman
 For her soul's screen—
 The sort of beauty that's called human
 In hell, Faustine.

You could do all things but be good
 Or chaste of mien;
 And that you would not if you could,
 We know, Faustine.

Even he who cast seven devils out
 Of Magdalene
 Could hardly do as much, I doubt,
 For you, Faustine.

Did Satan make you to spite God?
 Or did God mean
 To scourge with scorpions for a rod
 Our sins, Faustine?

I know what queen at first you were,
 As though I had seen
 Red gold and black imperious hair
 Twice crown Faustine.

As if your fed sarcophagus
 Spared flesh and skin,
 You come back face to face with us,
 The same Faustine.

She loved the games men played with death,
 Where death must win;
 As though the slain man's blood and breath
 Revived Faustine.

Nets caught the pike, pikes tore the net;
 Lithe limbs and lean
 From drained-out pores dripped thick red
 sweat
 To soothe Faustine.

She drank the steaming drift and dust
 Blown off the scene;
 Blood could not ease the bitter lust
 That galled Faustine.

All round the foul fat furrows reeked,
 Where blood sank in;
 The circus splashed and scathed and shrieked
 All round Faustine.

But these are gone now: years entomb
 The dust and din;
 Yea, even the bath's fierce reek and fume
 That slew Faustine.

Was life worth living then? and now
 Is life worth sin?
 Where are the imperial years? and how
 Are you, Faustine?

Your soul forgot her joys, forgot
 Her times of teen;
 Yea, this life likewise will you not
 Forget, Faustine?

For in the time we know not of
 Did fate begin
 Weaving the web of days that wove
 Your doom, Faustine.

The threads were wet with wine, and all
 Were smooth to spin;
 They wove you like a Bacchanal,
 The first Faustine.

And Bacchus cast your mates and you
 Wild grapes to glean;
 Your flower-like lips dashed with dew
 From his, Faustine.

Your drenched loose hands were stretched
 to hold
 The vine's wet green,
 Long ere they coined in Roman gold
 Your face, Faustine.

Then after change of soaring feather
 And winnowing fin,
 You woke in weeks of feverish weather,
 A new Faustine.

A star upon your birthday burned,
 Whose fierce serene
 Red pulseless planet never yearned
 In heaven, Faustine.

Stray breaths of Sapphic song that blew
 Through Mitylene
 Shook the fierce quivering blood in you
 By night, Faustine.

The shameless nameless loves that makes
 Hell's iron gin
 Shut on you like a trap that breaks
 The soul, Faustine.

And when your veins were void and dead,
 What ghosts unclean
 Swarmed round the straitened barren bed
 That hid Faustine?

What sterile growths of sexless root
 Or epicene?
 What flower of kisses without fruit
 Of love, Faustine?

What adders came to shed their coats?
 What coiled obscene
 Small serpents with soft stretching throats
 Caressed Faustine?

But the time came of famished hours,
 Maimed loves and mean,
 This ghastly thin-faced time of ours,
 To spoil Faustine.

You seem a thing that hinges hold,
 A love-machine
 With clockwork joints of supple gold—
 No more, Faustine.

Not godless, for you serve one God,
 The Lampsacene,
 Who metes the gardens with his rod;
 Your lord, Faustine.

If one should love you with real love
 (Such things have been,
 Things your fair face knows nothing of,
 It seems, Faustine);

That clear hair heavily bound back,
 The lights wherein
 Shift from dead blue to burnt-up black;
 Your throat, Faustine,

Strong, heavy, throwing out the face
 And hard bright chin
 And shameful scornful lips that grace
 Their shame, Faustine,

Cuiled lips, long since half kissed away,
 Still sweet and keen;
 You'd give him—poison shall we say?
 Or what, Faustine?

A CAMEO

THERE was a graven image of Desire
 Painted with red blood on a ground of
 gold
 Passing between the young men and
 the old,
 And by him Pain, whose body shone like
 fire,
 And Pleasure with gaunt hands that grasp-
 ed their hire.
 Of his left wrist, with fingers clenched
 and cold,
 The insatiable Satieté kept hold

Walking with feet unshod that pashed the
 mire.
 The senses and the sorrows and the sins,
 And the strange loves that suck the
 breasts of Hate
 Till lips and teeth bite in their sharp
 indenture,
 Followed like beasts with flap of wings and
 fins.
 Death stood aloof behind a gaping grate,
 Upon whose lock was written *Perad-
 venture*.

SONG BEFORE DEATH.

(FROM THE FRENCH.)

1795.

SWEET mother, in a minute's span
 Death parts thee and my love of thee.
 Sweet love, that yet art living man,

Come back, true love, to comfort me.
 Back, ah, come back! ah wellaway!
 But my love comes not any day.

As roses, when the warm West blows,
 Break to full flower and sweeten spring,
 My soul would break to a glorious rose
 In such wise at his whispering
 In vain I listen ; wellaway !
 My love says nothing any day.

You that will weep for pity of love
 On the low place where I am lain,
 I pray you, having wept enough,
 Tell him for whom I bore such pain
 That he was yet, ah ! wellaway !
 My true love to my dying day.

ROCOCO.

TAKE hand and part with laughter;
 Touch lips and part with tears;
 Once more and no more after,
 Whatever comes with years.
 We twain shall not remeasure
 The ways that left us twain;
 Nor crush the lees of pleasure
 From sanguine grapes of pain.

We twain once well in sunder,
 What will the mad gods do
 For hate with me, I wonder,
 Or what for love with you ?
 Forget them till November,
 And dream there's April yet,
 Forget that I remember,
 And dream that I forget.

Time found our tired love sleeping,
 And kissed away his breath;
 But what should we do weeping,
 Though light love sleep to death ?
 We have drained his lips at leisure,
 Till there's not left to drain
 A single sob of pleasure,
 A single pulse of pain.

Dream that the lips once breathless
 Might quicken if they would;
 Say that the soul is deathless;
 Dream that the gods are good;
 Say march may wed September,
 And time divorce regret;
 But not that you remember,
 And not that I forget.

We have heard from hidden places
 What love scarce lives and hears:
 We have seen on fervent faces
 The pallor of strange tears:
 We have trod the wine-vats treasure,
 Whence, ripe to steam and stain,
 Foams round the feet of pleasure
 The blood-red must of pain.

Remembrance may recover
 And time bring back to time
 The name of your first lover,
 The ring of my first rhyme;
 But rose-leaves of December
 The frosts of June shall fret,
 The day that you remember,
 The day that I forget.

The snake that hides and hisses
 In heaven we twain have known;
 The grief of cruel kisses,
 The joy whose mouth makes moan;
 The pulses pause and measure,
 Where in one furtive vein
 Throbs through the heart of pleasure
 The purpler blood of pain.

We have done with tears and treasons
 And love for treason's sake;
 Room for the swift new seasons,
 The years that burn and break,
 Dismantle and dismember
 Men's days and dreams, Juliette;
 For love may not remember,
 But time will not forget.

Life treads down love in flying,
 Time withers him at root;
 Bring all dead things and dying,
 Reaped sheaf and ruined fruit,
 Where, crushed by three days' pressure
 Our three days' love lies slain;
 And earlier leaf of pleasure,
 And latter flower of pain.

Breathe close upon the ashes,
 It may be flame will leap;
 Unclose the soft close lashes,
 Lift up the lids and weep:
 Light love's extinguished ember,
 Let one tear leave it wet
 For one that you remember
 And ten that you forget.

STAGE LOVE

WHEN the game began between them for
 a jest,
 He played king and she played queen to
 match the best;
 Laughter soft as tears, and tears that turned
 to laughter,
 These were things she sought for years and
 sorrowed after.

Pleasure with dry lips, and pain that walks
 by night;
 All the sting and all the stain of long de-
 light;
 These were things she knew not of, that
 knew not of her,
 When she played at half a love with half a
 lover.

Time was chorus, gave them cues to laugh
 or cry;
 They would kill, befool, amuse him, let
 him die;
 Set him webs to weave to-day and break
 to-morrow,
 Till he died for good in play, and rose in
 sorrow.

What the years mean; how times dies and
 is not slain;
 How love grows and laughs and cries and
 wanes again;
 These were things she came to know, and
 take their measure,
 When the play was played out so for one
 man's pleasure,

THE LEPER.

NOTHING is better, I well think,
 Than love; the hidden well-water
 Is not so delicate to drink:
 This was well seen of me and her.

I served her in a royal house;
 I served her wine and curious meat
 For will to kiss between her brows
 I had no heart to sleep or eat.

Mere scorn God knows she had of me:

A poor scribe, nowise great or fair,
Who plucked his clerk's hood back to see
Her curled up lips and amorous hair.

I vex my head with thinking this.

Yea, though God always hated me,
And hates me now that I can kiss
Her eyes, plait up her hair to see

How she then wore it on the brows,
Yet am I glad to have her dead
Here in this wretched wattled house
Where I can kiss her eyes and head.

Nothing is better, I well know,
Than love; no amber in cold sea
Or gathered berries under snow:
That is well seen of her and me.

Three thoughts I make my pleasure of:
First I take heart and think of this:
That knight's gold hair she chose to love,
His mouth she had such will to kiss.

Then I remember that sundawn
I brought him by a privy way
Out at her lattice, and thereon
What gracious words she found to say.

«Cold rushes for such little feet—
Both feet could lie into my hand.
A marvel was it of my sweet
Her upright body could so stand.)

“Sweet friend, God give you thank and
grace
Now am I clean and whole of shame,
Nor shall men burn me in the face
For my sweet fault that scandals them.”

I tell you over word by word.
She, sitting edgewise on her bed,
Holding her feet, said thus. The third,
A sweeter thing than these, I said.

God, that makes time and ruins it,
And alters not abiding God,
Changed with disease her body sweet,
The body of love wherein she abode.

Love is more sweet and comlier
Than a dove's throat strained out to sing.
All they spat out and cursed at her
And cast her forth for a base thing.

They cursed her, seeing how God had
wrought

This curse to plague her, a curse of his.
Fools were they surely, seeing not
How sweeter than all sweet she is.

He that had held her by the hair,
With kissing lips blinding her eyes,
Felt her bright bosom, strained and bare,
Sigh under him, with short mad cries,

Out of her throat and sobbing mouth
And body broken up with love,
With sweet hot tears his lips were loth
Her own should taste the savor of,

Yea, he inside whose grasp all night
Her fervered body leapt or lay,
Stained with sharp kisses red and white,
Found her a plague to spurn away.

I hid her in this wattled house,
I served her water and poor bread,
For joy to kiss between her brows
Time upon time I was nigh dead.

Bread failed; we got but well-water
And gathered grass with dropping seed.
I had such joy of kissing her,
I had small care to sleep or feed.

Sometimes when service made me glad
The sharp tears leapt between my lids,
Falling on her, such joy I had
To do the service God forbids.

“I pray you let me be at peace,
Get hence, make room for me to die.”
She said that: her poor lip would cease,
Put up to mine, and turn to cry.

I said, “Bethink yourself how love
Fared in us twain, what either did;
Shall I unclothe my soul thereof?
That I should do this, God forbid.”

Yea, though God hateth us, he knows
That hardly in a little thing
Love faileth of the work it does
Till it grow ripe for gathering.

Six months, and now my sweet is dead
A trouble takes me; I know not
If all were done well, all well said,
No word or tender deed forgot.

Too sweet, for the least part in her,
To have shed life out by fragments; yet,
Could the close mouth catch breath and
stir,

I might see something I forget.

Six months, and I sit still and hold
In two cold palms her cold two feet.
Her hair, half grey half ruined gold,
Thrills me and burns me in kissing it.

Love bites and stings me through, to see
Her keen face made of sunken bones.
Her worn-off eyelids madden me,
That were shot through with purple once.

She said, "Be good with me; I grow
So tired for shame's sake, I shall die
If you say nothing:" even so.
And she is dead now and shame put by.

Yea, and the scorn she had of me
In the old time, doubtless vexed her
then.

I never should have kissed her. See
What fools God's anger makes of men!

She might have loved me a little too.
Had I been humbler for her sake.

But that new shame could make love new
She saw not—yet her shame did make.

I took too much upon my love,
Having for such mean service done
Her beauty and all the ways thereof,
Her face and all the sweet thereon.

Yea, all this while I tended her.
I know the old love held fast his part:
I know the old scorn waxed heavier,
Mixed with sad wonder, in her heart.

It may be all my love went wrong—
A scribe's work writ awry and blurred,
Scrawled after the blind evensong—
Spoilt music with no perfect word.

But surely I would fain have done
All things the best I could. Perchance
Because I failed, came short of one,
She kept at heart that other man's.

I am grown blind with all these things;
It may be now she hath in sight
Some better knowledge; still there clings
The old question. Will not God do
right?

En ce temps-là estoit dans ce pays grand nombre de ladres et de meseaulx, ce dont le roy eut grand desplaisir, ven que Dieu dust en estre moult grievement courroucé. Ores il advint qu'une noble damoy-selle appelée Yolande de Sallières estant atteinte et toustes guastée de ce vilain mal, tous ses amys et ses parens ayant devant leurs yeux la paour de Dieu la firent issir fors de leurs maisons et oncques ne voulurent recevoir ni reconforter chose maudicte de Dieu et à tous les hommes puante et abhominable. Ceste danie avoyt esté moult belle et gracieuse de formes, et de son corps elle estoit large et de vie lascive. Pourtant nul des amans qui l'avoient souventesfois accollée et basiée moult tendrement ne voulust plus héberger si laide femme et si détestable pescheresse. Ung seul clerc qui feut premièrement son lacquays et son entremetteur en matière d'amour la recut chez luy et la récélé dans une petite cabane. Là mourut la meschinette de grande misère et de male mort: et après elle décéda ledist clerc qui pour grand amour l'avcyt six mois durant soignée, lavée, habillée et deshhabillée tous les jours de ses mains propres. Mesme dist-on que ce meschant homme et maudict clerc remémourant de la grande beauté passée et guastée de ceste femme se délectoyt maintesfois à la baiser sur sa bouche orde et l'apreuve et l'accoller doucement de ses mains amoureuses. Aussy est-il mort de ceste mesme maladie abhominable. Cecy advint près Fontainebellant en Gastinois. Et quand ouyt le roy Philippe ceste aventure moult en estoit esmerveillé.

Graudes Chroniques de France, 1505.

A BALLAD OF BURDENS.

THE burden of fair women. Vain delight,
 And love self-slain in some sweet shameful way,
 And sorrowful old age that comes by night
 As a thief comes that has no heart by day,
 And change that finds fair cheeks and leaves them grey,
 And weariness that keeps awake for hire,
 And grief that says what pleasure used to say;
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bought kisses. This is sore,
 A burden without fruit in childbearing;
 Between the nightfall and the dawn three-score,
 Threescore between the dawn and evening.
 The shuddering in thy lips, the shuddering
 In thy sad eyelids tremulous like fire,
 Makes love seem shameful and a wretched thing.
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sweet speeches. Nay, kneel down,
 Cover thy head, and weep; for verily
 These market-men that buy thy white and brown
 In the last days shall take no thought for thee.
 In the last days like earth thy face shall be,
 Yea, like sea-marsh made thick with brine and mire,
 Sad with sick leavings of the sterile sea.
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of long living. Thou shalt fear
 Waking, and sleeping mourn upon thy bed;
 And say at night "Would God the day were here,"
 And say at dawn "Would God the day were dead."

With weary days thou shalt be clothed and fed,
 And wear remorse of heart for thine attire,
 Pain for thy girdle and sorrow upon thine head;
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bright colors. Thou shalt see
 Gold tarnished, and the grey above the green;
 And as the thing thou seest thy face shall be,
 And no more as the thing beforetime seen.
 And thou shalt say of mercy "It hath been,"
 And living, watch the old lips and loves expire,
 And talking, tears shall take thy breath between.
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sad sayings. In that day
 Thou shalt tell all thy days and hours, and tell
 Thy times and ways and words of love, and say
 How one was dear and one desirable,
 And sweet was life to hear and sweet to smell,
 But now with lights reverse the old hours retire
 And the last hour is shod with fire from hell.
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of four seasons. Rain in spring,
 White rain and wind among the tender trees;
 A summer of green sorrows gathering,
 Rank autumn in a mist of miseries,
 With sad face set towards the year, that sees
 The charred ash drop out of the dropping pyre,
 And winter wan with many maladies;
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of dead faces. Out of sight
 And out of love, beyond the reach of
 hands,
 Changed in the changing of the dark and
 light,
 They walk and weep about the barren
 lands
 Where no seed is nor any garner stands,
 Where in short breaths the doubtful days
 respire,
 And time's turned glass lets through the
 sighing sands;
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of much gladness. Life and
 lust
 Forsake thee, and the face of thy delight;
 And underfoot the heavy hour strews dust;

And overhead strange weathers burn and
 bite;
 And where the red was, lo the bloodless
 white,
 And where truth was, the likeness of a
 liar,
 And where day was, the likeness of the
 night;
 This is the end of every man's desire.

L'ENVOY.

Princes, and ye whom pleasure quickeneth,
 Heed well this rhyme before your plea-
 sure tire;
 For life is sweet, but after life is death.
 This is the end of every man's desire.

RONDEL.

KISSING her hair I sat against her feet,
 Wove and unwove it, wound and found it
 sweet
 Made fast therewith her hands, drew down
 her eyes,
 Deep as deep flowers and dreamy like dim
 skies;
 With her own tresses bound and found her
 fair,
 Kissing her hair.

Sleep were no sweeter than her face to me,
 Sleep of cold sea-bloom under the cold sea;
 What pain could get between my face and
 hers?
 What new sweet thing would love not relish
 worse?
 Unless, perhaps, white death had kissed
 me there,
 Kissing her hair?

BEFORE THE MIRROR.

(VERSES WRITTEN UNDER A PICTURE.)

INSCRIBED TO J. A. WHISTLER.

WHITE rose in red rose-garden
 Is not so white;
 Snowdrops that plead for pardon

And pine for fright
 Because the hard East blows
 Over their maiden rows
 Grow not as this face grows from pale to
 bright

Behind the veil, forbidden
 Shut up from sight,
 Love, is there sorrow hidden,
 Is there delight?
 Is joy thy dower of grief,
 White rose of weary leaf,
 Late rose whose life is brief, whose loves
 are light?

Soft snows that hard winds harden
 Till each flake bite
 Fill all the flowerless garden
 Whose flowers took flight
 Long since when summer ceased,
 And men rose up from feast.
 And warm west wind grew east, and
 warm day night.

II.

"Come snow, come wind or thunder
 High up in air,
 I watch my face, and wonder
 At my bright hair;
 Nought else exalts or grieves
 The rose at heart, that heaves
 With love of her own leaves and lips that
 pair.

"She knows not loves that kissed her
 She knows not where,
 Art thou the ghost, my sister,
 White sister there,
 Am I the ghost, who knows?
 My hand, a fallen rose,
 Lies snow-white on white snows, and
 takes no care.

"I cannot see what pleasures
 Or what pains were;
 What pale new loves and treasures
 New years will bear;
 What beam will fall, what shower,
 What grief or joy for dower;
 But one thing knows the flower; the
 flower is fair."

III.

Glad, but not flushed with gladness,
 Since joys go by;
 Sad, but not bent with sadness,
 Since sorrows die;
 Deep in the gleaming glass
 She sees all past things pass,
 And all sweet life that was lie down and
 lie.

There glowing ghosts of flowers
 Draw down, draw nigh;
 And wings of swift spent hours
 Take flight and fly;
 She sees by formless gleams,
 She hears across cold streams,
 Dead mouths of many dreams that sing
 and sigh.

Face fallen and white throat lifted,
 With sleepless eye
 She sees old loves that drifted,
 She knew not why,
 Old loves and faded fears
 Float down a stream that hears
 The flowing of all men's tears beneath
 the sky.

EROTION.

SWEET for a little even to fear, and sweet,
 O love, to lay down fear at love's fair feet;
 Shall not some fiery memory of his breath
 Lie sweet on lips that touch the lips of
 death?

Yet leave me not; yet, if thou wilt, be free;
 Love me no more, but love my love of thee.
 Love where thou wilt, and live thy life;
 and I,
 One thing I can, and one love cannot—die.

Pass from me; yet thine arms, thine eyes,
 thine hair,
 Feed my desire and deaden my despair.
 Yet once more ere time change us, ere my
 cheek
 Whiten; ere hope be dumb or sorrow speak,
 Yet once more ere thou hate me, one full
 kiss;
 Keep other hours for others, save me this.
 Yea, and I will not (if it please thee) weep,

Lest thou be sad; I will but sigh, and sleep.
Sweet, does death hurt? thou canst not do
me wrong:

I shall not lack thee, as I loved thee, long.
Hast thou not given me above all that live
Joy, and a little sorrow shalt not give?

What even though fairer fingers of strange
girls

Pass nestling through thy beautiful boy's
curls

As mine did, or those curled lithe lips of
thine

Meet theirs as these, all theirs come after
mine;

And though I were not, though I be not,
best,

I have loved and love thee more than all
the rest.

O love, O lover, loose or hold me fast,
I had thee first, whoever have thee last;

Fairer or not, what need I know, what care?
To thy fair bud my blossom once seemed
fair.

Why am I fair at all before thee, why

At all desired? seeing thou art fair, not I.

I shall be glad of thee, O fairest head,

Alive, alone, without thee, with thee, dead;

I shall remember while the light lives yet.

And in the night-time I shall not forget.

Though (as thou wilt) thou leave me ere
life leave,

I will not, for thy love I will not, grieve;

Not as they use who love not more than I.

Who love not as I love thee though I die;

And though thy lips, once mine, be oftener
prest

To many another brow and balmier breast,

And sweeter arms, or sweeter to thy mind,

Lull thee or lure, more fond thou wilt not
find.

IN MEMORY OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Back to the flower-town, side by side,
The bright months bring,
New-born, the bridegroom and the bride,
Freedom and spring.

The sweet land laughs from sea to sea,
Filled full of sun;
All things come back to her, being free;
All things but one.

In many a tender wheaten plot
Flowers that were dead
Live, and old suns revive; but not
That holier head.

By this white wandering waste of sea,
Far north, I hear
One face shall never turn to me
As once this year:

Shall never smile and turn and rest
On mine as there,
Nor one most sacred hand be prest
Upon my hair.

I came as one whose thoughts half linger,
Half run before;
The youngest to the oldest singer
That England bore.

I found him whom I shall not find
Till all grief end,
In holiest age our mightiest mind,
Father and friend.

But thou, if anything endure,
If hope there be,
O spirit that man's life left pure,
Man's death set free.

Not with disdain of days that were
 Look earthward now;
 Let dreams revive the reverend hair,
 The imperial brow.

Come back in sleep, for in the life
 Where thou art not
 We find none like thee. Time and strife
 And the world's lot.

Move thee no more; but love at least
 And reverent heart

May move thee, royal and released,
 Soul, as thou art.

And thou, his Florence, to thy trust
 Receive and keep,
 Keep safe his dedicated dust,
 His sacred sleep.

So shall thy lovers, come from afar,
 Mix with thy name
 As morning-star with evening-star
 His faultless fame.

A SONG IN TIME OF ORDER. 1852.

PUSH hard across the sand,
 For the salt wind gathers breath;
 Shoulder and wrist and hand,
 Push hard as the push of death.

The wind is as iron that rings,
 The foam-heads loosen and flee;
 It swells and welters and swings,
 The pulse of the tide of the sea.

And up on the yellow cliff
 The long corn flickers and shakes;
 Push, for the wind holds stiff,
 And the gunwale dips and rakes.

Good hap to the fresh fierce weather,
 The quiver and beat of the sea !
 While three men hold together,
 The kingdoms are less by three.

Out to the sea with her there,
 Out with her over the sand,
 Let the kings keep the earth for their share !
 We have done with the sharers of land.

They have tied the world in a tether,
 They have bought over God with a fee;
 While three men hold together,
 The kingdoms are less by three.

We have done with the kisses that sting,
 The thief's mouth red from the feast,
 The blood on the hands of the king,
 And the lie at the lips of the priest.

Will they tie the winds in a tether,
 Put a bit in the jaws of the sea ?
 While three men hold together,
 The kingdoms are less by three.

Let our flag run out straight in the wind !
 The old red shall be floated again
 When the rank that are thin shall be
 thinned,
 When the names that were twenty are
 ten;

When the devil's riddle is mastered
 And the galley-bench creaks with a
 Pope,
 We shall see Buonaparte the bastard
 Kick heels with his throat in a rope.

While the shepherd sets wolves on his
 sheep
 And the emperor halts his Kine,
 While Shame is a watchman asleep
 And Faith is a keeper of swine,

Let the wind shake our flag like a feather,
 Like the plumes of the foam of the sea!
 While three men hold together,
 The kingdoms are less by three.

All the world has its burdens to bear,
 From Cayenne to the Austrian whips;

Forth, with the rain in our hair
 And the salt sweet foam in our lips;

In the teeth of the hard glad weather,
 In the blown wet face of the sea;
 While three men hold together,
 The kingdoms are less by three.

A SONG IN TIME OF REVOLUTION. 1860.

THE heart of the rulers is sick, and the
 high-priest covers his head:
 For this is the song of the quick that is
 heard in the ears of the dead.

The poor and the halt and the blind are
 keen and mighty and fleet:
 Like the noise of the blowing of wind is
 the sound of the noise of their feet.

The wind has the sound of a laugh in the
 clamor of days and of deed:
 The priests are scattered like chaff, and
 the rulers broken like reeds.

The high-priest sick from qualms, with his
 raiment bloodily dashed;
 The thief with branded palms, and the liar
 with cheeks abashed.

They are smitten, they tremble greatly, they
 are pained for their pleasant things:
 For the house of the priests made stately,
 and the might in the mouth of the
 kings.

They are grieved and greatly afraid; they
 are taken, they shall not flee:
 For the heart of the nations is made as the
 strength of the springs of the sea.

They were fair in the grace of gold, they
 walked with delicate feet:
 They were clothed with the cunning of old,
 and the smell of their garments was
 sweet.

For the breaking of gold in their hair they
 halt as a man made lame:
 They are utterly naked and bare; their
 mouths are bitter with shame.

Wilt thou judge thy people now, O king
 that wast found most wise?
 Wilt thou lie any more, O thou whose
 mouth is emptied of lies?

Shall God make a pact with thee, till his
 hook be found in thy sides?
 Wilt thou put back the time of the sea, or
 the place of the season of tides?

Set a word in thy lips, to stand before God
 with a word in thy mouth:
 That "the rain shall return in the land,
 and the tender dew after drouth."

But the arm of the elders is broken, their
 strength is unbound and undone:
 They wait for a sign of a token; they cry,
 and there cometh none.

Their moan is in every place, the cry of
 them filleth the land:
 There is shame in the sight of their face,
 there is fear in the thews of their hand.

They are girdled about the reins with a
 curse for the girdle thereon:
 For the noise of the rending of chains the
 face of their color is gone.

For the sound of the shouting of men they
are grievously stricken at heart:
They are smitten asunder with pain, their
bones are smitten apart.

There is none of them all that is whole;
their lips gape open for breath:
They are clothed with sickness of soul,
and the shape of the shadow of death.

The wind is thwart in their feet; it is full
of the shouting of mirth;
As one shaketh the sides of a sheet so it
shaketh the ends of the earth.

The sword, the sword is made keen; the
iron has opened its mouth;
The corn is red that was green; it is bound
for the sheaves of the south.

The sound of a word was shed, the sound
of the wind as a breath

In the ears of the souls that were dead, in
the dust of the deepness of death;

Where the face of the moon is taken, the
ways of the stars undone,
The light of the whole sky shaken, the
light of the face of the sun:

Where the waters are emptied and broken,
the waves of the waters are stayed;
Where God has bound for a token the
darkness that maketh afraid;

Where the sword was covered and hidden,
and dust had grown in its side,
A word came forth which was bidden, the
crying of one that cried:

The sides of the two-edged sword shall be
bare, and its mouth shall be red,
For the breath of the face of the Lord that
is felt in the bones of the dead.

TO VICTOR HUGO.

IN the fair days when God
By man as godlike trod,
And each alike was Greek, alike was free,
God's lightning spared, they said,
Alone the happier head
Whose laurels screened it; fruitless grace
for thee,
To whom the high gods gave of right
Their thunders and their laurels and their
light.

Sunbeams and bays before
Our master's servants wore,
For these Appollo left in all men's lands
But far from these ere now
And watched with jealous brow
Lay the blind lightnings shut between
God's hands,
And only loosed on slaves and kings
The terror of the tempest of their wings.

Born in those younger years
That shone with storms of spears
And shook in the wind blown from a dead
world's pyre,
When by her back-blown hair
Napoleon caught the fair
And fierce Republic with her feet of fire,
And stayed with iron words and hands
Her flight, and freedom in a thousand lands:

Thou sawest the tides of things
Close over heads of kings,
And thine hand felt the thunder and to
thee
Laurels and lightnings were
As sunbeams and soft air
Mixed each in other, or as mist with sea
Mixed, or as memory with desire,
Or the lute's pulses with the louder lyre.

For thee man's spirit stood
 Disrobed of flesh and blood,
 And bear the heart of the most secret hours;
 And to thine hand more tame
 Than birds in winter came
 High hopes and unknown flying forms of
 powers;
 And from thy table fed, and sang
 Till with the tune men's ears took fire and
 rang.

Even all men's eyes and ears
 With fiery sound and tears
 Waxed hot, and cheeks caught flame and
 eyelids light,
 At those high songs of thine
 That stung the sense like wine,
 Or fell more soft than dew or snow by
 night,
 Or wailed as in some flooded cave
 Sobs the strong broken spirit of a wave.

But we, our master, we
 Whose hearts, uplift to thee,
 Ache with the pulse of thy remembered
 song,
 We ask not nor await
 From the clenched hands of fate,
 As thou, remission of the world's old
 wrong;
 Respite we ask not, nor release;
 Freedom a man may have, he shall not
 peace.

Though thy most fiery hope
 Storm heaven, to set wide ope
 The all-sought-for gate whence God or
 Chance debars
 All feet of men, all eyes—
 The old night resumes her skies,
 Her hollow hiding-place of clouds and
 stars,
 Where nought save these is sure in
 sight
 And, paven with death, our days are
 roofed with night.

One thing we can; to be
 Awhile, as men may, free;
 But not by hope or pleasure the most stern
 Goddess, most awful-eyed,
 Sits, but on either side
 Sits sorrow and the wrath of hearts that
 burn,
 Sad faith, that cannot hope or fear,

And memory grey with many a flowerless
 year.

Not that in stranger's wise
 I lift not loving eyes
 To the fair foster-mother France, that gave
 Beyond the pale fleet foam
 Help to my sires and home,
 Whose great sweet breast could shelter
 those and save
 Whom from her nursing breasts and
 hands
 Their land cast forth of old on gentler
 lands.

Not without thoughts that ache
 For theirs and for thy sake,
 I, born of exiles, hail thy banished head
 I whose young song took flight
 Toward the great heat and light
 On me a child from thy far splendor shed,
 From thine high place of soul and
 song,
 Which, fallen on eyes yet feeble, made
 them strong.

Ah, not with lessening love,
 For memories born hereof,
 I look to that sweet mother-land, and see
 The old fields and fair full streams,
 And skies, but fled like dreams
 The feet of freedom and the thought of
 thee;
 And all between the skies and graves
 The mirth of mockers and the shame of
 slaves.

She, killed with noisome air,
 Even she! and still so fair,
 Who said "Let there be freedom," and
 there was
 Freedom; and as a lance
 The fiery eyes of France
 Touched the world's sleep and as a sleep
 made pass
 Forth of men's heavier ears and eyes
 Smitten with fire and thunder from new
 skies.

Are they men's friends indeed
 Who watch them weep and bleed?
 Because thou hast loved us, shall the gods
 love thee?
 Thou first of men and friend,
 Seest thou, even thou, the end?

Thou knowest what hath been, knowest
 thou what shall be ?
 Evils may pass and hopes endure;
 But fade is dim, and all the gods obscure.

O nursed in airs apart,
 O poet highest of heart,
 Hast thou seen time, who hast seen so
 many things ?
 Are not the years more wise,
 More sad than keenest eyes,
 The years with soundless feet and sounding
 wings ?
 Passing we hear them not, but past
 The clamor of them thrills us, and their
 blast.

Thou art chief of us, and lord;
 Thy song is as a sword
 Keen-edged and scented in the blade from
 flowers;
 Thou art lord and king but we
 Lift younger eyes; and see
 Less of high hope, less light on wandering
 hours ;
 Hours that have borne men down so
 long,
 Seen the right fail, and watched uplift the
 wrong.

But thine imperial soul
 As years and ruins roll
 To the same end, and all things and all
 dreams
 With the same wreck and roar
 Drift on the dim same shore,
 Still in the bitter foam and brackish
 streams
 Tracks the fresh water-spring to be
 And sudden sweeter fountains in the sea.

As once the high God bound
 With many a rivet round
 Man's saviour, and with iron nailed him
 through,
 At the wild end of things,
 Where even his own bird's wings
 Flagged whence the sea shone like a drop
 of dew,
 From Caucasus beheld below
 Past fathoms of unfathonable snow;
 So the strong God, the chance
 Central of circumstance,
 Still shows him exile who will not be slave;

All thy great fame and thee
 Girt by the dim strait sea
 With multitudinous walls of wandering
 wave;

Shows us our greatest from his throne
 Fate-stricken, and rejected of his own.

Yea, he is strong, thou say'st,
 A mystery many-faced,
 The wild beasts know him and the wild
 birds flee;
 The blind night sees him, death
 Shrinks beaten at his breath,
 And his right hand is heavy on the sea:
 We know he hath made us, and is
 king;
 We know not if he care for anything.'

Thus much, no more, we know;
 He bade what is be so,
 Bade light be and bade night be, one by
 one;
 Bade hope and fear, bade ill
 And good redeem and kill,
 Till all men be weary of the sun
 And this world burn in its own flame
 And bear no witness longer of his name.

Yet though all this be thus,
 Be those men praised of us
 Who have loved and wrought and sorrowed
 and not sinned
 For fame or fear or gold,
 Nor waxed for winter cold,
 Nor changed for changes of the worldly
 wind;
 Praised above men of men be these.
 Till this one world and work we know
 shall cease.

Yea, one thing more than this,
 We know that one thing is,
 The splendor of a spirit without blame
 That not the laboring years
 Blind-born, nor any fears,
 Nor men nor any gods can tire or tame;
 But purer power with fiery breath
 Fills, and exalts above the gulfs of death.

Praised above men be thou,
 Whose laurel-laden brow,
 Made for the morning, droops not in the
 night;
 Praised and beloved, that none
 Of all thy great things done

Flies higher than thy most equal spirits flight; Praised, that nor doubt nor hope could bend	Earth's loftiest head, found upright to the end.
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BEFORE DAWN.

SWEET life, if life were stronger,
 Earth clear of years that wrong her,
 Then two things might live longer,
 Two sweeter things than they;
 Delight, the rootless flower,
 And love, the bloomless bower;
 Delight that lives an hour,
 And love that lives a day.

From evensong to daytime,
 When April melts in Maytime,
 Love lengthens out his playtime,
 Love lessens breath by breath,
 And kiss by kiss grows older
 On listless throat or shoulder
 Turned sidewise now, turned colder
 Than life that dreams of death.

This one thing once worth giving
 Life gave, and seemed worth living;
 Sin sweet beyond forgiving
 And brief beyond regret:
 To laugh and love together
 And weave with foam and feather
 And wind and words the tether
 Our memories play with yet.

Ah, one thing worth beginning,
 One thread in life worth spinning,
 Ah sweet, one sin worth sinning
 With all the whole soul's will;
 To lull you till one stilled you,
 To kiss you till one killed you,
 To feed you till one filled you,
 Sweet lips, if love could fill;

To hunt sweet Love and lose him
 Between white arms and bosom,
 Between the bud and blossom,
 Between your throat and chin;

To say of shame—what is it?
 Of virtue—we can miss it,
 Of sin—we can but kiss it,
 And it's no longer sin:

To feel the strong soul, stricken
 Through fleshly pulses, quicken
 Beneath swift sighs that thicken,
 Soft hands and lips that smite;
 Lips that no love can tire,
 With hands that sting like fire,
 Weaving the web Desire
 To snare the bird Delight.

But love so lightly plighted,
 Our love with torch unlighted,
 Paused near us unaffrighted,
 Who found and left him free;
 None, seeing us cloven in sunder,
 Will weep or laugh or wonder;
 Light love stands clear of thunder,
 And safe from winds at sea.

As, when late larks give warning,
 Of dying lights and dawning,
 Night murmurs to the morning,
 "Lie still, O love, lie still;"
 And half her dark limbs cover
 The white limbs of her lover,
 With amorous plumes that hover
 And fervent lips that chill;

As scornful day represses
 Night's void and vain caresses,
 And from her cloudier tresses
 Unwinds the gold of his,
 With limbs from limbs dividing
 And breath by breath subsiding;
 For love has no abiding,
 But dies before the kiss.

So hath it been, so be it;
 For who shall live and flee it ?
 But look that no man see it
 Or hear it unaware;

Lest all who love and choose him
 See Love, and so refuse him;
 For all who find him lose him,
 But all have found him fair.

DOLORES.

(NOTRE-DAME DES SEPT DOULEURS.)

COLD eyelids that hide like a jewel;
 Hard eyes that grow soft for an hour;
 The heavy white limbs, and the cruel
 Red mouth like a venomous flower;
 When these are gone by with their glories,
 What shall rest of thee then, what remain,
 O mystic and sombre Dolores
 Our lady of Pain ?

Seven sorrows the priests give their Virgin;
 But thy sins, which are seventy times
 seven,
 Seven ages would fail thee to purge in,
 And then they would haunt thee in
 heaven:
 Fierce midnights and famishing morrows,
 And the loves that complete and control
 All the joys of the flesh, all the sorrows
 That wear out the soul.

O garment not golden but gilded
 O garden where all men may dwell,
 O tower not of ivory, but builded
 By hands that reach heaven from heli;
 O mystical rose of the mire,
 O house not of gold but of gain,
 O house of unquenchable fire,
 Our Lady of Pain !

O lips full of lust and of laughter,
 Curled snakes that are fed from my breast
 Bite hard, lest remembrance come after
 And press with new lips where you
 pressed.
 For my heart too springs up at the pressure,

Mine eyelids too moisten and burn;
 Ah, feed me and fill me with pleasure,
 Ere pain come in turn.

In yesterday's reach and to-morrow's,
 Out of sight though they lie of to-day,
 There have been and there yet shall be sor-
 rows,
 That smite not and bite not in play.
 The life and the love thou despisest,
 These hurt us indeed, and in vain,
 O wise among women, and wisest,
 Our Lady of Pain.

Who gave thee thy wisdom ? what stories
 That stung thee, what visions that smote ?
 Wert thou pure and a maiden, Dolores,
 When desire took thee first by the throat ?
 What bud was the shell of a blossom
 That all men may smell to and pluck ?
 What milk fed thee first at what bosom ?
 What sins gave thee suck ?

We shift and bedeck and bedrape us,
 Thou art noble and nude and antique,
 Libitina thy mother, Priapus
 Thy father, a Tuscan and Greek.
 We play with light loves in the portal,
 And wince and relent and refrain;
 Loves die, and we know thee immortal.
 Our Lady of Pain.

Fruits fail and love dies and time ranges;
 Thou art fed with perpetual breath,
 And alive after infinite changes,

And fresh from the kisses of death ;
 Of languors rekindled and rallied,
 Of barren delights and unclean,
 Things monstrous and fruitless, a pallid
 And poisonous queen.

Could you hurt me, sweet lips, though I
 hurt you ?

Men touch them, and change in a trice
 Th lilies and languors of virtue
 For the raptures and roses of vice;
 Those lie where thy foot on the floor is,
 These crown and caress thee and chain,
 O splendid and sterile Dolores,
 Our Lady of Pain.

There are sins it may be to discover,
 There are deeds it may be to delight.
 What new work wilt thou find for thy lover ?
 What new passions for daytime or night ?
 What spells that they know not a word of
 Whose lives are as leaves overblown ?
 What tortures undreamt of, unheard of,
 Unwritten, unknown ?

Ah beautiful passionate body
 That never has ached with a heart !
 On thy mouth though the kisses are bloody,
 Though they sting till it shudder and
 smart,
 More kind than the love we adore is,
 They hurt not the heart or the brain,
 O bitter and tender Dolores,
 Our Lady of Pain.

As our kisses relax and redouble,
 From the lips and the foam and the fangs
 Shall no new sin be born for men's trouble,
 No dream of impossible pangs ?
 With the sweet of the sins of old ages
 Wilt thou satiate thy soul as of yore ?
 Too sweet is the rind, say the sages,
 Too bitter the core.

Hast thou told all thy secrets the last time,
 And bared all thy beauties to one ?
 Ah, where shall we go then for pastime,
 If the worst that can be has been done ?
 But sweet as the rind was the core is;
 We are fain of thee still, we are fain,
 O sanguine and subtle Dolores,
 Our Lady of Pain.

By the hunger of change and emotion,
 By the thirst of unbearable things,
 By despair, the twin-born of devotion,

By the pleasure that winces and stings,
 The delight that consumes the desire,
 The desire that outruns the delight,
 By the cruelly deaf as a fire
 And blind as the night.

By the ravenous teeth that have smitten
 Through the kisses that blossom and bud,
 By the lips intertwined and bitten
 Till the foam has a savor of blood,
 By the pulse as it rises and falters,
 By the hands as they slacken and strain,
 I adjure thee, respond from thine altars,
 Our Lady of Pain.

Wilt thou smile as a woman disdain
 The light fire in the veins of a boy ?
 But he comes to thee sad, without feigning,
 Who has wearied of sorrow and joy;
 Less careful of labor and glory
 Than the elders whose hair has uncurled;
 And young, but with fancies as hoary
 And grey as the world.

I have passed from the outermost portal
 To the shrine where a sin is a prayer;
 What care though the service be mortal ?
 O our lady of Torture, what care ?
 All thine the last wine that I pour is,
 The last in the chalice we drain,
 O fierce and luxurious Dolores,
 Our Lady of Pain.

All thine the new wine of desire,
 The fruit of four lips as they clung
 Till the hair and the eyelids took fire,
 The foam of a serpentine tongue,
 The froth of the serpents of pleasure,
 More salt than the foam of the sea,
 Now felt as a flame, now at leisure
 As wine shed for me.

Ah thy people, thy children, thy chosen,
 Marked cross from the womb and per-
 verse !
 They have found out the secret to cozen
 The gods that constrain us and curse;
 They alone, they are wise, and none other;
 Give me place, even me, in their train,
 O my sister, my spouse, and my mother,
 Our Lady of Pain.

For the crown of our life as it closes
 Is darkness, the fruit thereof dust;
 No thorns go as deep as a rose's,

And love is more cruel than lust.
Time turns the old days to derision,
Our loves into corpses or wives;
And marriage and death and division
Make barren our lives.

And pale from the past we draw nigh thee
And satiate with comfortless hours;
And we know thee, how all men belie thee,
And we gather the fruit of thy flowers;
The passion that slays and recovers,
The pangs and the kisses that rain
On the lips and the limbs of thy lovers,
Our Lady of Pain.

The desire of thy furious embraces
Is more than the wisdom of years,
On the blossom though blood lie in traces,
Though the foliage be sodden with tears.
For the lords in whose keeping the door is
That opens on all who draw breath
Gave the cypress to love, my Dolores,
The myrtle to death.

And they laughed, changing hands in the
measure,
And they mixed and made peace after
strife;
Pain melted in tears, and was pleasure;
Death tingled with blood, and was life.
Like lovers they melted and tingled,
In the dusk of thine innermost fame;
In the darkness they murmured and mingled,
Our Lady of Pain.

In a twilight where virtues are vices,
In thy chapels, unknown of the sun,
To a tune that enthralls and entices,
They were wed, and the train were as
one.

For the tune from thine altar hath sounded
Since God bade the world's work begin,
And the fume of thine incense abounded,
To sweeten the sin.

Love listens, and paler than ashes,
Through his curls as the crown on them
slips,
Lifts languid wet eyelids and lashes,
And laughs with insatiable lips.
Thou shalt hush him with heavy caresses,
With music that scares the profane;
Thou shalt darken his eyes with thy tresses,
Our Lady of Pain.

Thou shalt blind his bright eyes though he
wrestle,
Thou shalt chain his light limbs though
he strive;

In his lips all thy serpents shall nestle,
In his hands all thy cruelties thrive.
In the daytime thy voice shall go through
him,

In his dreams he shall feel thee and ache;
Thou shalt kindle by night and subdue him
Asleep and awake.

Thou shalt touch and make redder his roses
With juice not of fruit nor of bud;
When the sense in the spirit reposes,
Thou shalt quicken the soul through the
blood.

Thine, thine the one grace we implore is,
Who would live and not languish or feign,
O sleepless and deadly Dolores,
Our Lady of Pain.

Dost thou dream, in a respite of slumber,
In a lull of the fires of thy life,
Of the days without name, without number,
When thy will stung the world into strife,
When, a goddess, the pulse of thy passion
Smote kings as they revelled in Rome;
And they hailed thee re-risen, O Thalassian,
Foam-white, from the foam?

When thy lips had such lovers to flatter,
When the city lay red from thy rods,
And thine hands were as arrows to scatter
The children of change and their gods;
When the blood of thy foemen made fervent
A sand never moist from the main,
As one smote them, their lord and thy
servant,
Our Lady of Pain.

On sands by the storm never shaken,
Nor wet from the washing of tides;
Nor by foam of the waves overtaken,
Nor winds that the thunder bestrides;
But red from the print of thy paces,
Made smooth for the world and its lords,
Ringed round with a flame of fair faces,
And splendid with swords.

There the gladiator, pale for thy pleasure,
Drew bitter and perilous breath;
There torments laid hold on the treasure
Of limbs too delicious for death;
When thy gardens were lit with live torches,

When the world was a steed for thy rein;
When the nations lay prone in thy porches,
Our Lady of Pain.

When, with flame all around him aspirant,
Stood flushed, as a harp-player stands,
The implacable beautiful tyrant,
Rose-crowned, having death in his hands;
And a sound as the sound of loud water
Smote far through the flight of the fires,
And mixed with the lightning of slaughter
A thunder of lyres.

Dost thou dream of what was and no more
is,
The old kingdoms of earth and the
kings?
Dost thou hunger for these things, Dolores,
For these, in a world of new things?
But thy bosom no fasts could emaciate,
No hunger compel to complain
Those lips that no bloodshed could satiate,
Our Lady of Pain.

As of old when the world's heart was
lighter,
Through thy garments the grace of thee
glows,
The white wealth of thy body made whiter
By the blushes of amorous blows,
And seamed with sharp lips and fierce fin-
gers,
And branded by kisses that bruise;
When all shall be gone that now lingers,
Ah, what shall we lose?

Thou wert fair in the fearless old fashion,
And thy limbs are as melodies yet,
And move to the music of passion
With lithe and lascivious regret.
What ailed us, O gods, to desert you
For creeds that refuse and restrain?
Come down and redeem us from virtue,
Our Lady of Pain.

All shrines that were Vestal are flameless;
But the flame has not fallen from this,
Though obscure be the god, and though
nameless

The eyes and the hair that we kiss;
Low fires that love sits by and forges
Fresh heads for his arrows and thine;
Hair loosened and soiled in mid orgies
With kisses and wine.

Thy skin changes country and color,
And shrivels or swells to a snake's.
Let it brighten and bloat and grow duller,
We know it, the flames and the flakes,
Red brands on it smitten and bitten,
Round skies where a star is a stain,
And the leaves with thy litanies written,
Our Lady of Pain.

On thy bosom though many a kiss be,
There are none such as knew it of old.
Was it Alciphron once or Arisbe,
Male ringlets or feminine gold
That thy lips met with under the statue,
Whence a look shot out sharp after
thieves
From the eyes of the garden god at you
Across the fig-leaves?

Then still, through dry seasons, and mois-
ter,
One god had a wreath to his shrine;
The love was the pearl of his oyster,*
And Venus rose red out of wine.
We have all done amiss, choosing rather
Such loves as the wise gods disdain;
Intercede for us thou with thy father,
Our Lady of Pain.

In spring he had crowns of his garden,
Red corn in the heat of the year,
Then hoary green olives that harden
When the grape-blossom freezes with fear;
And milk-budded myrtles with Venus
And vine-leaves with Bacchus he trod;
And ye said, "We have seen, he hath seen
us,
A visible God."

What broke off the garlands that girt you?
What sundered you spirit and clay?
Weak sins yet alive are as virtue
To the strength of the sins of that day.
For dried is the blood of thy lover,
Ipsithilla, contracted the vein;
Cry aloud, "Will he rise and recover,
Our Lady of Pain?"

Cry aloud; for the old world is broken;
Cry out; for the Phrygian is priest,
And rears not the bountiful token
And spreads not the fatherly feast.

* "Nam te præcipuè in suis urbibus colit ora
Hellespontia, cæteris ostensor oris."
CATULL. *Carm.* xviii.

From the midmost of Ida, from shady
 Recesses that murmur at morn,
 They have brought and baptized her, Our
 Lady,
 A goddess new-born.

And the chaplets of old are above us,
 And the oyster-bed teems out of reach;
 Old poets outsing and outlove us,
 And Catullus makes mouths at our speech.
 Who shall kiss, in thy father's own city,
 With such lips as he sang with, again?
 Intercede for us all of thy pity,
 Our Lady of Pain.

Out of Dindymus heavily laden
 Her lions draw bound and unfed
 A mother, a mortal, a maiden,
 A queen over death and the dead.
 She is cold, and her habit is lowly,
 Her temple of branches and sods;
 Most fruitful and virginal, holy,
 A mother of gods.

She hath wasted with fire thine high places,
 She hath hidden and marred and made
 sad
 The fair limbs of the Loves, the fair faces
 Of gods that were goodly and glad.
 She slays, and her hands are not bloody,
 She moves as a moon in the wane,
 White-robed, and thy raiment is ruddy,
 Our Lady of Pain.

They shall pass and their places be taken,
 The gods and the priests that are pure.
 They shall pass, and shalt thou not be
 shaken?
 They shall perish, and shalt thou endure?
 Death laughs, breathing close and relentless
 In the nostrils and eyelids of lust,
 With a pinch in his fingers of scentless
 And delicate dust.

But the worm shall revive thee with kisses,
 Thou shalt change and transmute as a
 god,
 As the rod to a serpent that hisses,
 As the serpent again to a rod.
 Thy life shall not cease though thou doff it;
 Thou shalt live until evil be slain,
 And good shall die first, said thy prophet,
 Our Lady of Pain.

Did he lie? did he laugh? does he know it,
 Now he lies out of reach, out of breath,
 Thy prophet, thy preacher, thy poet,
 Sin's child by incestuous Death?
 Did he find out in fire at his waking,
 Or discern as his eyelids lost light,
 When the bands of the body were breaking
 And all came in sight?

Who has known all the evil before us,
 Or the tyrannous secrets of time?
 Though we watch not the dead men that
 bore us
 At a song, at a kiss, at a crime—
 Though the heathen outface and outlive us,
 And our lives and our longings are twain—
 Ah, forgive us our virtues, forgive us,
 Our Lady of Pain.

Who are we that embalm and embrace thee
 With spices and savors of song?
 What is time, that his children should face
 thee;
 What am I, that my lips do thee wrong?
 I could hurt thee—but pain would delight
 thee;
 Or caress thee—but love would repel;
 And the lovers whose lips would excite thee
 Are serpents in hell.

Who now shall content thee as they did,
 Thy lovers, when temples were built
 And the hair of the sacrifice braided
 And the blood of the sacrifice spilt,
 In Lampsacus fervent with faces,
 In Aphaca red from thy reign.
 Who embraced thee with awful embraces,
 Our Lady of Pain?

Where are they, Cotytto or Venus,
 Astarte or Ashtaroth, where?
 Do their hands as we touch come between
 us?
 Is the breath of them hot in thy hair?
 From their lips have thy lips taken fever,
 With the blood of their bodies grown red?
 Hast thou left upon earth a believer
 If these men are dead?

They were purple of raiment and golden,
 Filled full of thee, fiery with wine,
 Thy lovers, in haunts unbeholden,
 In marvellous chambers of thine.
 They are fled, and their footprints escape
 us,

Who appraise thee, adore, and abstain,
O daughter of Death and Priapus,
Our Lady of Pain.

As foam upon water shall perish
As sand upon shore

What ails us to fear overmeasure,
To praise thee with timorous breath,
O mistress and mother of pleasure,
The one thing as certain as death?
We shall change as the things that we
cherish,
Shall fade as they faded before,

We shall know what the darkness discovers,
If the grave-pit be shallow or deep,
And our fathers of old, and our lovers,
We shall know if they sleep not or sleep.
We shall see whether hell be not heaven,
Find out whether tares be not grain,
And the joys of thee seventy times seven,
Our Lady of Pain.

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE.

HERE, where the world is quiet,
Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
In doubtful dreams of dreams;
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest time and mowing,
A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
And men that laugh and weep;
Of what may come hereafter
For men that sow to reap:
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers
And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,
And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labor,
Weak ships and spirits steer;
They drive adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither,
But no such winds blow hither,
And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
No heather-flower or vine,

But bloomless buds of poppies,
Green grapes of Proserpine.
Pale beds of blowing rushes
Where no leaf blooms or blushes,
Save this wherout she crushes
For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber
All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven.
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell.
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes;
And well though love repose,
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stand,
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;

Her languid lips are sweeter
 Than love's who fears to greet her
 To men that mix and meet her
 From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
 She waits for all men born;
 Forgets the earth her mother,
 The life of fruits and corn;
 And spring and seed and swallow
 Take wing for her and follow
 Where summer song rings hollow
 And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
 The old loves with wearier wings
 And all dead years draw thither,
 And all disastrous things;
 Dead dreams of days forsaken
 Blind buds that snows have shaken,
 Wild leaves that winds have taken,
 Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
 And joy was never sure;

To-day will die to-morrow;
 Time stoops to no man's lure;
 And love, grown faint and fretful
 With lips but half regretful
 Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
 Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
 From hope and fear set free,
 We thank with brief thanksgiving
 Whatever gods may be
 That no life lives for ever;
 That dead men rise up never;
 That even the weariest river
 Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
 Nor any change of light:
 Nor sound of waters shaken,
 Nor any sound or sight:
 Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
 Nor days nor things diurnal;
 Only the sleep eternal
 In an eternal night.

HESPERIA.

Out of the golden remote wild west where
 the sea without shore is,
 Full of the sunset, and sad, if at all, with
 the fulness of joy,
 As a wind sets in with the autumn that
 blows from the region of stories,
 Blows with a perfume of songs and of
 memories beloved from a boy,
 Elows from the capes of the past oversea to
 the bays of the present,
 Filled with shadow of sound with the
 pulse of invisible feet,
 Far out to the shallows and straits of the
 future, by rough ways or pleasant,

Is it thither the wind's wings beat? is it
 hither to me, O my sweet?
 For thee, in the stream of the deep tide-
 wind blowing in with the water,
 Thee I behold as a bird borne in with the
 wind from the west,
 Straight from the sunset, across white waves
 whence rose as a daughter
 Venus thy mother, in years when the
 world was a water at rest.
 Out of the distance of dreams, as a dream
 that abides after slumber,
 Strayed out from the fugitive flock of the
 night, when the moon overhead

- Wanes in the wan waste heights of the
 heaven, and stars without number
 Die without sound, and are spent like
 lamps that are burnt by the dead,
 Comes back to me, stays by me, lulls me
 with touch of forgotten caresses,
 One warm dream clad about with a fire
 as of life that endures;
 The delight of thy face, and the sound of
 thy feet, and the wind of thy tresses,
 And all of a man that regrets, and all of
 a maid that allures.
 But thy bosom is warm for my face and
 profound as a manifold flower,
 Thy silence as music, thy voice as an
 odor that fades in a flame;
 Not a dream, not a dream is the kiss of thy
 mouth, and the bountiful hour
 That makes me forget what was sin, and
 would make me forget were it shame.
 Thine eyes that are quiet, thine hands that
 are tender, thy lips that are loving,
 Comfort and cool me as dew in the dawn
 of a moon like a dream;
 And my heart yearns baffled and blind,
 moved vainly toward thee, and mov-
 ing
 As the reflux seaweed moves in the
 languid exuberant stream,
 Fair as a rose is on earth, as a rose under
 water in prison,
 That stretches and swings to the slow
 passionate pulse of the sea,
 Closed up from the air and the sun, but
 alive, as a ghost re-arisen,
 Pale as the love that revives as a ghost
 re-arisen in me.
 From the bountiful infinite west, from the
 happy memorial places
 Full of the stately repose and the lordly
 delight of the dead,
 Where the fortunate islands are lit with the
 light of ineffable faces,
 And the sound of a sea without wind is
 about them, and sunset is red,
 Come back to redeem and release me from
 love that recalls and represses,
 That cleaves to my flesh as a flame, till
 the serpent has eaten his fill;
 From the bitter delights of the dark, and
 the feverish, the furtive caresses
 That murder the youth in a man or ever
 his heart have its will
- Thy lips cannot laugh and thine eyes can-
 not weep; thou art pale as a rose is,
 Paler and sweeter than leaves that cover
 the blush of the bud;
 And the heart of the flower is compassion,
 and pity the core it encloses,
 Pity, not love, that is born of the breath
 and decays with the blood.
 As the cross that a wild nun clasps till the
 edge of it bruises her bosom,
 So love wounds as we grasp it, and
 blackens and burns as a flame;
 I have loved overmuch in my life; when the
 live bud bursts with the blossom,
 Bitter as ashes or tears is the fruit, and
 the wine thereof shame.
 As a heart that its anguish divides is the
 green bud cloven asunder;
 As the blood of a man self-slain is the
 flush of the leaves that allure;
 And the perfume as poison and wine to
 the brain, a delight and a wonder;
 And the thorns are too sharp for a boy;
 too slight for a man, to endure.
 Too soon did I love it, and lost love's rose;
 and I cared not for glory's:
 Only the blossoms of sleep and of plea-
 sure were mixed in my hair.
 Was it myrtle or poppy thy garland was
 woven with, O my Dolores?
 Was it pallor or slumber, or blush as of
 blood, that I found in thee fair?
 For desire is a respite from love, and the
 flesh not the heart is her fuel;
 She was sweet to me once, who am fled
 and escaped from the rage of her
 reign;
 Who behold as of old time at hand as I
 turn, with her mouth growing cruel,
 And tushed as with wine with the blood
 of her lovers,
 Our Lady of Pain.
 Low down where the thicket is thicker with
 thorns than with leaves in the sum-
 mer,
 In the brake is a gleaming of eyes and a
 hissing of tongues that I knew;
 And the lithe long throats of her snakes
 reach round her, their mouths over-
 come her,
 And her lips grow cool with their foam,
 made moist as a desert with dew.
 With the thirst and the hunger of lust
 though her beautiful lips be so bitter

With the cold foul foam of the snakes
 they soften and redden and smile;
 And her fierce mouth sweetens, her eyes
 wax wide and her eyelashes glitter,
 And she laughs with a savor of blood in
 her face, and a savor of guile.
 She laughs, and her hands reach hither, her
 hair blows hither and hisses,
 As a low-lit flame in a wind, back-blown
 till it shudder and leap;
 Let her lips not again lay hold on my soul,
 nor her poisonous kisses,
 To consume it alive and divide from thy
 bosom, Our Lady of Sleep.
 Ah daughter of sunset and slumber, if now
 it return into prison,
 Who shall redeem it anew? but we, if
 thou wilt, let us fly;
 Let us take to us, now that the white skies
 thrill with a moon unarisen,
 Swift horses of fear or of love, take flight
 and depart and not die.
 They are swifter than dreams, they are
 stronger than death; there is none
 that hath ridden,
 None that shall ride in the dim strange
 ways of his life as we ride:

By the meadows of memory, the highlands
 of hope, and the shore that is hidden,
 Where life breaks loud and unseen, a
 sonorous invisible tide;
 By the sands where sorrow has trodden,
 the salt pools bitter and sterile,
 By the thundering reef and the low sea-
 wall and the channel of years,
 Our wild steeds press on the night, strain
 hard through pleasure and peril.
 Labor and listen and pant not or pause
 for the peril that nears;
 And the sound of them trampling the way
 cleaves night as an arrow asunder,
 And slow by the sand-hill and swift by
 the down with its glimpses of grass
 Sudden and steady the music, as eight hoofs
 trample and thunder,
 Rings in the ear of the low blind wind of
 the night as we pass;
 Shrill shrieks in our faces the blind bland
 air that was mute as a maiden,
 Stung into storm by the speed of our
 passage, and deaf where we past;
 And our spirits too burn as we bound, thine
 holy but mine heavy-laden,
 As we burn with the fire of our flight; ah,
 love, shall we win at the last?

LOVE AT SEA.

We are in love's land to-day;
 Where shall we go?
 Love, shall we start or stay,
 Or sail or row?
 There's many a wind and way,
 And never a May but May;
 We are in love's hand to-day;
 Where shall we go?

Our landwind is the breath
 Of sorrows kissed to death
 And joys that were;

Our ballast is a rose;
 Our way lies where God knows
 And love knows where.
 We are in love's hand to-day—

Our seamen are fledged Loves,
 Our masts are bills of doves,
 Our decks fine gold;
 Our ropes are dead maids' hairs,
 Our stores are love-shafts fair,
 And manifold.

We are in love's land to-day—

Where shall we land you, sweet?
 On fields of strange men's feet,
 Or fields near home?
 Or where the fire-flowers blow,
 Or where the flowers of snow
 Or flowers of foam?
 We are in love's hand to-day—

Land me, she says, where love
 Shows but one shaft, one dove,
 One heart, one hand,
 —A shore like that, my dear,
 Lies where no man will steer,
 No maiden land.
 Imitated from Theophile Gautier.

APRIL

FROM THE FRENCH OF THE VIDAME DE CHARTRES.

12—?

WHEN the fields catch flower
 And the underwood is green,
 And from bower unto bower
 The songs of the birds begin,
 I sing with sighing between.
 When I laugh and sing,
 I am heavy at heart for my sin;
 I am sad in the spring
 For my love that I shall not win,
 For a foolish thing.

This profit I have of my woe,
 That I know, as I sing,
 I know he will needs have it so
 Who is master and king,
 Who is lord of the spirit of spring.
 I will serve her and will not spare
 Till her pity awake
 Who is good, who is pure, who is fair,
 Even her for whose sake
 Love hath ta'en me and slain unaware.

O my Lord, O Love,
 I have laid my life at thy feet;
 Have thy will thereof,
 Do as it please thee with it,
 For what shall please thee is sweet.
 I am come unto thee
 To do thee service, O Love;

Yet cannot I see
 Thou wilt take any pity thereof,
 Any mercy on me.

But the grace I have long time sought
 Comes never in sight,
 If in her it abideth not,
 Through thy mercy and might,
 Whose heart is the world's delight.
 Thou hast sworn without fail I shall die,
 For my heart is set
 On what hurts me, I wot not why,
 But cannot forget
 What I love, what I sing for and sigh

She is worthy of praise,
 For this grief of her giving is worth
 All the joy of my days
 That lie between death's day and birth
 All the lordship of things upon earth.
 Nay, what have I said?
 I would not be glad if I could;
 My dream and my dread
 Are of her, and for her sake I would
 That my life were fled.

Lo, sweet, if I durst not pray to you,
 Then were I dead;
 If I sang not a little to say to you,
 (Could it be said)
 O my love, how my heart would be fed;

Ah sweet who hast hold of my heart
 For thy love's sake I live,
 Do but tell me, ere either depart,
 What a lover may give

For a woman so fair as thou art
 The lovers that disbelieve,
 False rumors shall grieve
 And evil-speaking shall part

BEFORE PARTING.

A MONTH or twain to live on honeycomb
 Is pleasant; but one tires of scented time,
 Cold sweet recurrence of accepted rhyme,
 And that strong purple under juice and
 foam
 Where the wine's heart has burst;
 Nor feel the latter kisses like the first.

Once yet, this poor one time; I will not
 pray
 Even to change the bitterness of it,
 The bitter taste ensuing on the sweet,
 To make your tears fall where your soft hair
 lay
 All blurred and heavy in some perfumed
 wise
 Over my face and eyes.

And yet who knows what end the scythed
 wheat
 Makes of its foolish poppies' mouths of
 red?
 These were not sown, these are not har-
 vested,
 They grow a month and are cast under feet
 And none has care thereof,
 As none has care of a divided love.

I know each shadow of your lips by rote,
 Each change of love in eyelids and eye-
 brows;
 The fashion of fair temples tremulous
 With tender blood, and color of your throat;
 I know not how love is gone out of this,
 Seeing that all was his.

Love's likeness there endures, upon all
 these:
 But out of these one shall not gather love.
 Day hath not strength nor the night shade
 enough
 To make love whole and fill his lips with
 ease,
 As some bee-built cell
 Feels at filled lips the heavy honey swell.

I know not how this last month leaves your
 hair
 Less full of purple color and hid spice,
 And that luxurious trouble of closed eyes
 Is mixed with meaner shadow and waste
 care;
 And love, kissed out by pleasure, seems not
 yet
 Worth patience to regret.

THE SUNDEW.

A LITTLE marsh-plant, yellow green,
And pricked at lip with tender red.
Tread close, and either way you tread
Some faint black water jets between
Lest you should bruise the curious head.

A live thing may be; who shall know?
The summer knows and suffers it;
For the cool moss is thick and sweet
Each side, and saves the blossom so
That it lives out the long June heat.

The deep scent of the heather burns
About it; breathless though it be,
Bow down and worship; more than we,
Is the least flower whose life returns,
Least weed renascent in the sea.

We are vexed and cumbered in earth's sight
With wants, with many memories;
These see their mother what she is,
Glad-growing, till August leave more bright
The apple-colored cranberries.

Wind blows and bleaches the strong grass,
Blown all one way to shelter it
From trample of strayed kine, with feet

Felt heavier than the moorhen was,
Strayed up past patches of wild wheat.

You call it sundew; how it grows,
If with its color it have breath,
If life taste sweet to it, if death
Pain its soft petal, no man knows:
Man has no sight or sense that saith

My sundew, grown of gentle days,
In these green miles the spring begun
Thy growth ere April had half done
With the soft secret of her ways
Or June made ready for the sun.

O red-lipped mouth of marsh-flower,
I have a secret halved with thee.
The name that is love's name to me
Thou knowest, and the face of her
Who is my festival to see.

The hard sun, as thy petals knew,
Colored the heavy moss-water:
Thou wert not worth green midsummer
Nor fit to live to August blue,
O sundew, not remembering her.

F É L I S É .

Mais où sont les neiges d'antan.

WHAT shall be said between us here,
Among the downs, between the trees,
In fields that knew our feet last year,
In sight of quiet sands and seas,
This year, Félisé?

Who knows what word were best to say?
For last year's leaves lie dead and red
On this sweet day, in this green May,

E

And barren corn makes bitter bread.
What shall be said?

Here as last year the fields begin,
A fire of flowers and glowing grass;
The old fields we laughed and lingered in,
Seeing each our souls in last year's glass,
Félisé, alas!

Shall we not laugh, shall we not weep,
 Not we, though this be as it is?
 For love awake or love asleep
 Ends in a laugh, a dream, a kiss,
 A song like this.

I that have slept awake, and you
 Sleep, who last year were well awake.
 Though love do all that love can do,
 My heart will never ache or break
 For your heart's sake.

The great sea; faultless as a flower,
 Throbs, trembling under beam and
 breeze,
 And laughs with love of the amorous hour.
 I found you fairer once, Félise,
 Than flowers or seas.

We played at bondsman and at queer,
 But as the days change men change too;
 I find the grey sea's notes of green,
 The green sea's fervent flakes of blue,
 More fair than you.

Your beauty is not over fair
 Now in mine eyes, who am grown up
 wise.
 The smell of flowers in all your hair
 Allures not now; no sigh replies
 If your heart sighs.

But you sigh seldom, you sleep sound,
 You find love's new name good enough.
 Less sweet I find it than I found
 The sweetest name that ever love
 Grew weary of.

My snake with bright bland eyes, my snake
 Grown tame and glad to be caressed.
 With lips athirst for mine to slake
 Their tender fever! who had guessed
 You loved me best?

I had died for this last year, to know
 You loved me. Who shall turn on fate?
 I care not if love come or go
 Now, though your love seek mine for
 mate.
 It is too late.

The dust of many strange desires
 Lies deep between us; in our eyes
 Dead smoke of perishable fires
 Flickers, a fume in air and skies,
 A steam of sighs.

You loved me and you loved me not;
 A little, much, and overmuch.
 Will you forget as I forgot?
 Let all dead things lie dead; none such
 Are soft to touch.

I love you and I do not love,
 Too much, a little, not at all;
 Too much, and never yet enough.
 Birds quick to fledge and fly at call
 Are quick to fall.

And these love longer now than men,
 And larger loves than ours are these.
 No diver brings up love again
 Dropped once, my beautiful Félise,
 In such cold seas.

Gone deeper than all plummet's sound,
 Where in the dim green dayless day
 The life of such dead thing lies bound
 As the sea feeds on, wreck and stray
 And castaway.

Can I forget? yea, that can I,
 And that can all men; so will you,
 Alive, or later, when you die,
 Ah, but the love you plead was true?
 Was mine not too?

I loved you for that name of yours
 Long ere we met, and long enough.
 Now that one thing of all endures—
 The sweetest name that ever love
 Waxed weary of.

Like colors in the sea, like flowers,
 Like a cat's splendid circled eyes
 That wax and wane with love for hours,
 Green as green flame, blue-grey like skies,
 And soft like sighs—

And all these only like your name,
 And your name full of all of these.
 I say it, and it sounds the same—
 Save that I say it now at ease,
 Your name, Félise.

I said "she must be swift and white
 And subtly warm, and half perverse
 And sweet like sharp soft fruit to bite,
 And like a snake's love lithe and fierce.
 Men have guessed worse.

What was the song I made of you
 Here where the grass forgets our feet
 As afternoon forgets the dew?
 Ah that such sweet things should be fleet,
 Such fleet things sweet!

As afternoon forgets the dew,
 As time in time forgets all men,
 As our old place forgets us two,
 Who might have turned to one thing
 then,
 But not again.

O lips that mine have grown into
 Like April's kissing May,
 O fervent eyelids letting through
 Those eyes the greenest of things blue,
 The bluest of things grey,

If you were I and I were you,
 How could I love you, say?
 How could the roseleaf love the rue,
 The day love nightfall and her dew,
 Though night may love the day?

You loved it may be more than I;
 We know not; love is hard to seize,
 And all things are not good to try;
 And lifelong loves the worst of these
 For us, *Félice*.

Ah, take the season and have done,
 Love well the hour and let it go:
 Two souls may sleep and wake up one,
 Or dream they wake and find it so,
 And then—you know.

Kiss me once hard as though a flame
 Lay on my lips and made them fire;
 The same lips now, and not the same;
 What breath shall fill and re-inspire
 A dead desire?

The old song sounds hollower in mine ear
 Than thin keen sounds of dead men's
 speech—

A noise one hears and would not hear;
 Too strong to die, too weak to reach
 From wave to beach.

We stand on either side the sea,
 Stretch hands, blow kisses, laugh and
 lean

I toward you, you toward me;
 But what hears either save the keen
 Grey sea between?

A year divides us, love from love,
 Though you loved now, though I loved
 then.

The gulf is strait, but deep enough;
 Who shall recross, who among men
 Shall cross again?

Love was a jest last year, you said,
 And what lives surely, surely dies.
 Even so; but now that love is dead,
 Shall love rekindle from wet eyes,
 From subtle sighs?

For many loves are good to see;
 Mutable loves, and loves perverse;
 But there is nothing, nor shall be,
 So sweet, so wicked, but my verse
 Can dream of worse.

For we that sing and you that love
 Know that which man may, only we.
 The rest live under us; above,
 Live the great gods in heaven, and see
 What things shall be.

So this thing is and must be so;
 For man dies, and love also dies.
 Though yet love's ghost moves to and fro
 The sea-green mirrors of your eyes,
 And laughs, and lies.

Eyes colored like a water-flower,
 And deeper than the green sea's glass;
 Eyes that remember one sweet hour—
 In vain we swore it should not pass;
 In vain, alas!

Ah my *Félice*, if love or sin,
 If shame or fear could hold it fast,
 Should we not hold it? Love wears thin,
 And they laugh well who laugh the last.
 Is it not past?

The gods, the gods are stronger; time
 Falls down before them, all men's knees
 Bow, all men's prayers and sorrows climb
 Like incense towards them; yea, for
 these
 Are gods, *Félice*.

Immortal are they, clothed with powers,
 Not to be comforted at all;
 Lords over all the fruitless hours;
 Too great to appease, too high to appease,
 Too far to call.

For none shall move the most high gods,
 Who are most sad, being cruel; none
 Shall break or take away the rods
 Wherewith they scourge us, not as one
 That smites a son.

By many a name of many a creed
 We have called upon them, since the
 sands
 Fell through time's hour-glass first, a seed
 Of life; and out of many lands
 Have we stretched hands.

When have they heard us? who hath
 known
 Their faces, climbed unto their feet,
 Felt them and found them? Laugh or
 groan,
 Doth heaven remurmur and repeat
 Sad sounds or sweet?

Do the stars answer? in the night
 Have ye found comfort? or by day
 Have ye seen gods? What hope, what light,
 Falls from the farthest starriest way
 On you that pray?

Are the skies wet because we weep,
 Or fair because of any mirth?
 Cry out; they are gods; perchance they
 sleep;
 Cry; thou shalt know what prayers are
 worth,
 Thou dust and earth.

O earth, thou art fair; O dust, thou art
 great,
 O laughing lips and lips that mourn,
 Pray, till ye feel the exceeding weight
 Of God's intolerable scorn,
 Not to be borne.

Behold, there is no grief like this;
 The barren blossom of thy prayer,
 Thou shalt find out how sweet it is.
 O fools and blind, what seek ye there,
 High up in the air?

Ye must have gods, the friends of men,
 Merciful gods, compassionate,
 And these shall answer you again.
 Will ye beat always at the gate,
 Ye fools of fate?

Ye fools and blind: for this is sure,
 That all ye shall not live, but die.
 Lo, what thing have ye found endure?
 Or what thing have ye found on
 high
 Past the blind sky?

The ghosts of words and dusty dreams,
 Old memories, faiths infirm and dead.
 Ye fools; for which among you deems
 His prayer can alter green to red
 Or stones to bread?

Why should ye bear with hopes and fears
 Till all these things be drawn in one,
 The sound of iron-footed years,
 And all the oppression that is done
 Under the sun?

Ye might end surely, surely pass
 Out of the multitude of things,
 Under the dust, beneath the grass,
 Deep in dim death, where no thought
 stings,
 No record clings.

No memory more of love or hate,
 No trouble, nothing that aspires,
 No sleepless labor thwarting fate,
 And thwarted; where no travail tires,
 Where no faith fires.

All passes, nought that has been is,
 Things good and evil have one end.
 Can anything be otherwise
 Though all men swear all things would
 mend
 With God to friend?

Can ye beat off one wave with prayer,
 Can ye move mountains? bid the flower
 Take flight and turn to a bird in the air?
 Can ye hold fast for shine or shower
 One wingless hour?

Ah sweet, and we too, can we bring
 One sigh back, bid one smile revive?
 Can God restore one ruined thing,
 Or he who slays our souls alive
 Make dead things thrive?

Two gifts perforce he has given us yet,
Though sad things stay and glad things
fly;

Two gifts he has given us, to forget
All glad and sad things that go by,
And then to die.

We know not whether death be good,
But life at least it will not be :
Men will stand saddening as we stood,
Watch the same fields and skies as we
And the same sea.

Let this be said between us here,
One love grows green when one turns
grey;

This year knows nothing of last year;
To-morrow has no more to say
To yesterday.

Live and let live, as I will do,
Love and let love, and so will I.
But, sweet, for me no more with you :
Not while I live, not though I die.
Good-night, good-bye.

AN INTERLUDE.

In the greenest growth of the Maytime,
I rode where the woods were wet,
Between the dawn and the daytime
The spring was glad that we met.

There was something the season wanted,
Though the ways and the woods smelt
sweet;
The breath at your lips that panted,
The pulse of the grass at your feet.

You came, and the sun came after,
And the green grew golden above;
And the flag-flowers lightened with laugh-
ter,
And the meadow sweet shook with love.

Your feet in the full-grown grasses
Moved soft as a weak wind blows;
You passed me as April passes,
With face made out of a rose.

By the stream where the stems were slender,
Your bright foot paused at the sedge;
It might be to watch the tender
Light leaves in the springtime hedge.

On boughs that the sweet month blanches,
With flowery frost of May :
It might be a bird in the branches,
It might be a thorn in the way.

I waited to watch you linger
With foot drawn back from the dew,
Till a sunbeam straight like a finger
Struck sharp through the leaves at you

And a bird overhead sang *Follow*,
And a bird to the right sang *Here*;
And the arch of the leaves was hollow,
And the meaning of May was clear.

I saw where the sun's hand pointed,
I knew what the bird's note said;
By the dawn and the dewfall anointed,
You were queen by the gold on your head.

As the glimpse of a burnt-out ember
Recalls a regret of the sun,
I remember, forget, and remember
What Love saw done and undone.

I remember the way we parted,
The day and the way we met;
You hoped we were both broken-hearted,
And knew we should both forget.

And May with her world in flower
Seemed still to murmur and smile
As you murmured and smiled for an hour;
I saw you turn at the stile.

A hand like a white wood-blossom

You lifted, and waved, and passed,
With head hung down to the bosom,
And pale, as it seemed, at last.

And the best and the worst of this is
That neither is most to blame
If you've forgotten my kisses
And I've forgotten your name.

HENDECASYLLABICS.

IN the month of the long decline of roses
I, beholding the summer dead before me,
Set my face to the sea and journeyed silent,
Gazing eagerly where above the sea-mark
Flame as fierce as the fervid eyes of lions
Half divided the eyelids of the sunset:
Till I heard as it were a noise of waters
Moving tremulous under feet of angels
Multitudinous, out of all the heavens;
Knew the fluttering wind, the fluttered
foliage,
Shaken fitfully, full of sound and shadow;
And saw, trodden upon by noiseless angels,
Long mysterious reaches fed with moon-
light,
Sweet sad straits in a soft subsiding
channel,
Blown about by the lips of winds I knew
not,
Winds not born in the north nor any
quarter,
Winds not warm with the south nor any
sunshine;
Heard between them a voice of exultation,
"Lo, the summer is dead, the sun is faded,
Even like as a leaf the year is withered,

All the fruits of the day from all her
branches
Gathered, neither is any left to gather.
All the flowers are dead, the tender blos-
soms,
All are taken away; the season wasted,
Like an ember among the fallen ashes.
Now with light of the winter days, with
moonlight,
Light of snow, and the bitter light of hoar-
frost,
We bring flowers that fade not after autumn
Pale white chaplets and crowns of latter
seasons,
Fair false leaves (but the summer leaves
were false,)
Woven under the eyes of stars and planets.
When low light was upon the windy reaches
Where the flower of foam was blown, a lily
Dropt among the sonorous fruitless furrows
And green fields of the sea that make no
pasture;
Since the winter begins, the weeping winter,
All whose flowers are tears, and round his
temples
Iron blossom of frost is bound for ever."

SAPPHICS.

ALL the night sleep came not upon my eye-
lids,
Shed not dew, nor shook nor unclosed a
feather,
Yet with lips shut close and with eyes of
iron
, Stood and beheld me.

Then to me so lying awake a vision
Came without sleep over the seas and
touched me,
Softly touched mine eyelids and lips; and I
too,
Full of the vision,

Saw the white implacable Aphrodite,
Saw the hair unbound, and the feet un-
sandalled
Shine as fire of sunset on western waters;
Saw the reluctant

Feet, the straining plumes of the doves
that drew her,
Looking always, looking with necks re-
verted,
Back to Lesbos, back to the hills where-
under
Shone Mitylene;

Heard the flying feet of the Loves behind
her
Make a sudden thunder upon the waters,
As the thunder flung from the strong un-
closing
Wings of a great wind.

So the goddess fled from her place, with
awful
Sound of feet and thunder of wings around
her;
While behind a clamour of singing women
Severed the twilight.

Ah the singing, ah the delight, the passion,
All the Loves wept, listening; sick with
anguish,
Stood the crowned nine Muses about Apollo;
Fear was upon them,

While the tenth sang wonderful things they
knew not.
Ah the tenth, the Lesbian! the nine were
silent,
None endured the sound of her song for
weeping;
Laurel by laurel,

Faded all their crowns; but about her fore-
head,
Round her woven tresses and athen temples
White as dead snow, paler than grass in
summer,
Ravaged with kisses,

Shone a light of fire as a crown for ever,
Yea, almost the implacable Aphrodite
Saused and almost wept; such a song was
that song,
Yea, by her name too

Called her, saying, "Turn to me, O my
Sappho;"
Yet she turned her face from the Loves, she
saw not
Tears for laughter darken immortal eyelids,
Heard not about her

Fearful fitful wings of the doves departing,
Saw not how the bosom of Aphrodite
Shook with weeping, saw not her shaken
raiment,
Saw not her hands wrung;

Saw the Lesbians kissing across their
smitten
Lutes with lips more sweet than the sound
of lute-strings,
Mouth to mouth and hand upon hand, her
chosen,
Fairer than all men;

Only saw the beautiful lips and fingers,
Full of songs and kisses and little whispers
Full of music; only beheld among them
Soar, as a bird soars

Newly fledged, her visible song, a marvel,
Made of perfect sound and exceeding
passion,
Sweetly shapen, terrible, full of thunders,
Clothed with the wind's wings.

Then rejoiced she, laughing with love, and
scattered
Roses, awful roses of holy blossom;
Then the Loves thronged sadly with hidden
faces
Round Aphrodite,

Then the Muses, stricken at heart, were
silent;
Yea, the gods waxed pale; such a song
was that song.
All reluctant, all with a fresh repulsion,
Fled from before her.

All withdrew long since, and the land was
barren,
Full of fruitless women and music only.
Now perchance, when winds are assuaged
at sunset,
Lulled at the dewfall,

By the grey sea-side, unassuaged, unheard
 of,
 Unbeloved, unseen in the ebb of twilight,
 Ghosts of outcast women return lament-
 ing,
 Purged not in Lethe,

Clothed about with flame and with tears,
 and singing
 Songs that move the heart of the shaken
 heaven,
 Songs that break the heart of the earth
 with pity,
 Hearing, to hear them.

AT ELEUSIS.

MEN of Eleusis, ye that with long staves
 Sit in the market-houses, and speak words
 Made sweet with wisdom as the rare wine is
 Thickened with honey; and ye sons of these
 Who in the glad thick streets go up and
 down

For pastime or grave traffic or mere chance;
 And all fair women having rings of gold
 On hands or hair; and chiefest over these
 I name you, daughters of this man the
 king,

Who dipping deep smooth pitchers of pure
 brass

Under the bubbled wells, till each round lip
 Stooped with loose gurgle of waters in-
 coming,

Found me an old sick woman, lamed and
 lean,

Beside a growth of builded olive boughs
 Whence multiplied thick song of thick-
 plumed throats—

Also wet tears filled up my hollow hands
 By reason of my crying into them—

And pitied me; for as cold water ran
 And washed the pitchers full from lip to lip,
 So washed both eyes full the strong salt of
 tears.

And ye put water to my mouth, made sweet
 With brown hill-berries; so in time I spoke
 And gathered my loose knees from under
 me.

Moreover in the broad fair halls this month
 Have I found space and bountiful abode
 To please me. I Demeter speak of this,
 Who am the mother and the mate of things:
 For as ill men by drugs or singing words

Shut the doors inward of the narrowed
 womb

Like a lock bolted with round iron through,
 Thus I shut up the body and sweet mouth
 Of all soft pasture and the tender land,
 So that no seed can enter in by it

Though one sow thickly, nor some grain get
 out

Past the hard clods men cleave and bite
 with steel

To widen the sealed lips of them for use.
 None of you is there in the peopled street
 But knows how all the dry-drawn furrows
 ache

With no green spot made count of in the
 black:

How the wind finds no comfortable grass
 Nor is assuaged with lud nor breath of
 herbs;

And in hot autumn when ye house the
 stacks,

All fields are helpless in the sun, all trees
 Stand as a man stripped out of all but skin.
 Nevertheless ye sick have help to get
 By means and stablished ordinance of God;
 For God is wiser than a good man is.

But never shall new grass be sweet in earth
 Till I get righted of my wound and wrong
 By changing counsel of ill-minded Zeus.
 For of all other gods is none save me
 Clothed with like power to build and break
 the year.

I make the lesser green begin, when spring
 Touches not earth but with one fearful foot;
 And as a careful gilder with grave art
 Soberly colors and completes the face,

Mouth, chin and all, of some sweet work
in stone,

I carve the shapes of grass and tender corn
And color the ripe edges and long spikes
With the red increase and the grace of gold.
No tradesman in soft wools is cunninger
To kill the secret of the fat white fleece
With stains of blue and purple wrought in it.
Three moons were made and three moons
burnt away

While I held journey hither out of Crete
Comfortless, tended by grave Hecate
Whom my wound stung with double iron
point;

For all my face was like a cloth wrung out
With close and weeping wrinkles, and both
lids

Sodden with salt continuance of tears
For Hades and the sidelong will of Zeus
And that lame wisdom that has writhen
feet,

Cunning, begotten in the bed of Shame,
These three took evil will at me, and made
Such counsel that when time got wing to fly
This Hades out of summer and low fields
Forced the bright body of Persephone;
Out of pure grass, where she lying down,
red flowers

Made their sharp little shadows on her
sides,

Pale heat, pale color on pale maiden flesh—
And chill water slid over her reddening
feet,

Killing the throbs in their soft blood; and
birds,

Perched next her elbow and pecking at
her hair,

Stretched their necks more to see her than
even to sing.

A sharp thing is it I have need to say;
For Hades holding both white wrists of
hers

Unloosed the girdle and with knot by knot
Bound her between his wheels upon the
seat,

Bound her pure body, holiest yet and dear
To me and God as always, clothed about
With blossoms loosened as her knees went
down,

Let fall as she let go of this and this
By tens and twenties, tumbled to her feet,
White waifs or purple of the pasturage.
Therefore with only going up and down
My feet were wasted, and the gracious air,
To me uncomfortable and dun, became

As weak smoke blowing in the under world.
And finding in the process of ill days

What part had Zeus herein, and how as
mate

He coped with Hades, yokefellow in sin,
I set my lips against the meat of gods
And drank not, neither ate nor slept in
heaven.

Nor in the golden greeting of their mouths
Did ear take note of me, nor eye at all
Track my feet going in the ways of them
Like a great fire on some strait slip of land
Between two washing inlets of wet sea
That burns the grass up to each lip of
beach

And strengthens, waxing in the growth of
wind

So burnt my soul in me at heaven and
earth,

Each way a ruin and a hungry plague,
Visible evil; nor could any night
Put cool between mine eyelids, nor the sun
With competence of gold fill out my want.
Yea so my flame burnt up the grass and
stones,

Shone to the salt-white edges of thin sea,
Distempered all the gracious work, and
made

Sick change, unseasonable increase of days
And scant avail of seasons; for by this
The fair gods faint in hollow heaven: there
comes

No taste of burnings of the twofold fat
To leave their palates smooth, nor in their
lips

Soft rings of smoke and weak scent wander-
ing;

All cattle waste and rot, and their ill smell
Grows away from the lank unsavory flesh,
That no man slays for offering; the sea
And waters moved beneath the heath and
corn

Preserve the people of fin-twinkling fish,
And river-flies feed thick upon the smooth;
But all earth over is no man or bird
(Except the sweet race of the kingfisher)
That lacks not and is wearied with much
loss.

Meantime the purple inward of the house
Was softened with all grace of scent and
sound

In ear and nostril perfecting my praise;
Faint grape-flowers and cloven honey-cake
And the just grain with dues of the shed
salt

Made me content: yet my hand loosened not
 Its gripe upon your harvest all year long.
 While I, thus woman-muffled in wan flesh
 And waste externals of a perished face,
 Preserved the levels of my wrath and love
 Patiently ruled; and with soft offices
 Cooled the sharp noons and busied the
 warm nights

In care of this my choice, this child my
 choice,

Triptolemus, the king's selected son:
 That this fair yearlong body, which hath
 grown

Strong with strange milk upon the mortal
 lip

And nerved with half a god, might so in-
 crease

Outside the bulk and the bare scope of
 man:

And waxen over large to hold within
 Base breath of yours and this impoverished
 air,

I might exalt him past the flame of stars,
 The limit and walled reach of the great
 world.

Therefore my breast made common to his
 mouth

Immortal savors, and the taste whereat
 Twice their hard life strains out the colored
 veins

And twice its brain confirms the narrow
 shell.

Also at night, unwinding cloth from cloth
 As who unhusks an almond to the white
 And pastures curiously the purer taste,
 I bared the gracious limbs and the soft feet,
 Unswaddled the weak hands, and in mid
 ash

Laid the sweet flesh of either feeble side,
 More tender for impessure of some touch
 Than wax to any pen; and lit around
 Fire, and made crawl the white worm-
 shapen flame,

And leap in little angers spark by spark
 At head at once and feet; and the faint hair
 Hissed with rare sprinkles in the closer
 curl,

And like scaled oarage of a keen thin fish
 In sea-water, so in pure fire his feet
 Struck out, and the flame bit not in his
 flesh

But like a kiss it curled his lip, and heat
 Fluttered his eyelids; so each night I blew
 The hot ash red to purge him to full god.
 Ill is it when fear hungers in the soul

For painful food, and chokes thereon, being
 fed;

And ill slant eyes interpret the straight sun,
 But in their scope its white is wried to
 black:

By the queen Metaneira mean I this;
 For with sick wrath upon her lips and
 heart,

Narrowing with fear the spleenful passages,
 She thought to thread this webs's fine ravel
 out,

Nor leave her shuttle split in combing it:
 Therefore she stole on us, and with hard
 sight

Peered, and stooped close; then with pale
 open mouth

As the fire smote her in the eyes between
 Cried, and the child's laugh sharply short-
 ening

As fire doth under rain, fell off; the flame
 Writhed once all through and died, and in
 thick dark

Tears fell from mine on the child's weep-
 ing eyes,

Eyes dispossessed of strong inheritance
 And mortal fallen anew. Who not the less
 From bud of beard to pale-grey flower of
 hair

Shall wax vinewise to a lordly vine, whose
 grapes

Bleed the red heavy blood of swoln soft
 wine,

Subtle with sharp leaves' intricacy, until
 Full of white years and blossom of hoary
 days

I take him perfected; for whose one sake
 I am thus gracious to the least who stands
 Filleted with white wool and girt upon
 As he whose prayer endures upon the lip
 And falls not waste: wherefore let sacrifice
 Burn and run red in all the wider ways;
 Seeing I have sworn by the pale temples'
 band

And popped hair of gold Persephone
 Sad-tressed and pleached low down about
 her brows,

And by the sorrow in her lips and death
 Her dumb and mournful-mouthed minister,
 My word for you is eased of its harsh weight
 And doubled with soft promise; and your
 king

Triptolemus, this Celeus dead and swathed
 Purple and pale for golden burial,
 Shall be your helper in my services,
 Dividing earth and reaping fruits thereof

In fields where wait, well girt, well-
wreathen, all
The heavy-handed seasons all year through;
Saving the choice of warm spear-headed
grain,

And stooping sharp to the slant-sided share
All beasts that furrow the remeasured
land
With their bowed necks of burden equable.

AUGUST

THERE were four apples on the bough,
Half gold half red, that one might know
The blood was ripe inside the core;
The color of the leaves was more
Like stems of yellow corn that grow
Through all the gold June meadow's floor.

The warm smell of the fruit was good
To feed on, and the split green wood,
With all its bearded lips and stains
Of mosses in the cloven veins,
Most pleasant, if one lay or stood
In sunshine or in happy rains.

There were four apples on the tree,
Red stained through gold, that all might
see

The sun went warm from core to rind;
The green leaves made the summer blind
In that soft place they kept for me
With golden apples shut behind.

The leaves caught gold across the sun
And where the bluest air begun,
Thirsted for song to help the heat;
As I to feel my lady's feet
Draw close before the day were done;
Both lips grew dry with dreams of it

In the mute August afternoon
They trembled to some undertune
Of music in the silver air;
Great pleasure was it to be there
Till green turned duskier and the moon
Colored the corn-sheaves like gold hair.

That August time it was delight
To watch the red moons wane to white
'Twixt grey seamed stems of apple-trees;
A sense of heavy harmonies
Grew on the growth of patient night,
More sweet than shapen music is.

But some three hours before the moon
The air, still eager from the noon,
Flagged after heat, not wholly dead;
Against the stem I leant my head;
The color soothed me like a tune,
Green leaves all round the gold and red.

I lay there till the warm smell grew
More sharp, when flecks of yellow dew
Between the round ripe leaves had blurred
The rind with stain and wet; I heard
A wind that blew and breathed and blew,
Too weak to alter its one word.

The wet leaves next the gentle fruit
Felt smother, and the brown tree-roo
Felt the mould warmer: I too felt
(As water feels the slow gold melt
Right thought it when the day burns mute)
The peace of time wherein love dwelt.

There were four apples on the tree,
Gold stained on red that all might see
The sweet blood filled them to the core:
The color of her hair is more
Like stems of fair faint gold, that be
Mown from the harvest's middle-floor.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.*

THREE damsels in the queen's chamber,
 The queen's mouth was most fair;
 She spake a word of God's mother
 As the combs went in her hair.
 Mary that is of might,
 Bring us to thy Son's sight.

They held the gold combs out from her,
 A span's length off her head;
 She sang this song of God's mother
 And of her bearing-bed.
 Mary most full of grace,
 Bring us to thy Son's face.

When she sat at Joseph's hand,
 She looked against her side:
 And either way from the short silk band
 Her girdle was all wried.
 Mary that all good may,
 Bring us to thy Son's way.

Mary had three women for her bed,
 The twain were maiden's clean;
 The first of them had white and red,
 The third had riven green.
 Mary that is so sweet,
 Bring us to thy Son's feet.

She had three women for her hair,
 Two were gloved soft and shod;
 The third had feet and fingers bare,
 She was the likest God.
 Mary that wieldeth land,
 Bring us to thy Son's hand.

She had three woman for her ease,
 The twain were good women:
 The first two were the two Maries,
 The third was Magdalen.
 Mary that perfect is,
 Bring us to thy Son's kiss.

Joseph had three workmen in his stall,
 To serve him well upon;
 The first of them were Peter and Paul,
 The third of them was John.
 Mary, God's handmaiden,
 Bring us to thy Son's ken.

"If your child be none other man's,
 But if it be very mine,
 The bedstead shall be gold two spans,
 The bedfoot silver fine."
 Mary that made God mirth,
 Bring us to thy Son's birth.

"If the child be some other man's,
 And if it be none of mine,
 The manger shall draw two spans,
 Betwixen kine and kine."
 Mary that made sin cease,
 Bring us to thy Son's peace.

Christ was born upon this wise,
 It fell on such a night,
 Neither with sounds of psalteries,
 Nor with fire for light.
 Mary that is God's spouse,
 Bring us to thy Son's house.

The star came out upon the east
 With a great sound and sweet.
 Kings gave gold to make him feast
 And myrrh for him to eat.
 Mary, of thy sweet mood,
 Bring us to thy Son's good.

He had two handmaids at his head,
 One handmaid at his feet;
 The twain of them were fair and red
 The third one was right sweet.
 Mary that is most wise,
 Bring us to thy Son's eyes. Amen.

* Suggested by a drawing of Mr. D. G. Rossetti's.

THE MASQUE OF QUEEN BERSABE.

A MIRACLE-PLAY

KING DAVID.

KNIGHTS mine, all that be in hall,
I have a council to you all,
Because of this thing God lets fall

Among us for a sign.

For some days hence as I did eat
From kingly dishes my good meat,
There flew a bird between my feet

As red as any wine.

This bird had a long bill of red
And a gold ring above his head;
Long time he sat and nothing said,
Put softly down his neck and fed

From the gilt patens fine:

And as I marvelled at the last
He shut his two keen eyes fast
And suddenly woxe big and brast

Ere one should tell to nine.

PRIMUS MILES.

Sir, note this that I will say;
That Lord who maketh corn with hay
And morrows each of yesterday,
He hath you in his hand.

SECUNDUS MILES (*Paganus quidam*).

By Satan I hold no such thing;
For if wine swell within a king
Whose ears for drink are hot and ring,
The same shall dream of wine-bibbing
Whilst he can lie or stand.

QUEEN BERSABE.

Peace now, lords, for God is head.
Ye chirk as starlings that be fed
And gape as fishes newly dead;
The devil put your bones to bed,
Lo, this is all to say.

SECUNDUS MILES.

By Mahound, lords, I have good will
This devil's bird to wring and spill;
For now meseems our game goes ill,
Ye have scant hearts to play.

TERTIUS MILES.

Lo, sirs, this word is there said,
That Urias the knight is dead
Through some ill craft; by Poullis head,
I doubt his blood hath made so red
This bird that flew from the queen's bed
Whereof ye have such fear.

KING DAVID.

Yea, my good knave, and is it said
That I can raise men from the dead?
By God I think to have his head
Who saith words of my lady's bed
For any thief to hear.

Et percutiat eum in capite.

QUEEN BERSABE.

I wis men shall spit at me,
And say it were but right for thee
That one should hang thee on a tree;
Ho! it were a fair thing to see
The big stones bruise her false body;
Fie! who shall see her dead?

KING DAVID.

I rede you have no fear of this.
For as ye wot, the first good kiss
I had must be the last of his;
Now are ye queen of mine, I wis,
And lady of a house that is
Full rich of meat and bread.

PRIMUS MILES.

I bid you make good cheer to be
 So fair a queen as all men see.
 And hold us for your lieges free;
 By Peter's soul that hath the key,
 Ye have good hap of it.

SECUNDUS MILES.

I would that he were hanged and dead
 Who hath no joy to see your head
 With gold about it, barred on red;
 I hold him as a sow of lead
 That is so scant of wit.

Tunc dicat NATHAN propheta.

O king, I have a word to thee;
 The child that is in Bersabe
 Shall wither without light to see;
 This word is come of God by me
 For sin that ye have done.
 Because herein ye did not right,
 To take the fair one lamb to smite
 That was of Urias the knight;
 Ye wist he had but one.
 Full many sheep I wot ye had,
 And many women, when ye bade
 To do your will and keep you glad;
 And a good crown about your head
 With gold to show thereon.
 This Urias had one poor house
 With low-barred latoun shot-windows
 And scant of corn to fill a mouse;
 And rusty hasnets for his brows,
 To wear them to the bone.
 Yea the roofs also, as men sain,
 Were thin to hold against the rain;
 Therefore what rushes were there lain
 Grew wet withouten foot of men;
 The stancheons were all gone in twain
 As sick man's flesh is gone.
 Nathless he had great joy to see
 The long hair of this Bersabe
 Fall round her lap and round her
 Even to her small soft feet, that be
 Shod now with crimson royally
 And covered with clean gold.
 Likewise great joy he had to kiss
 Her throat, where now the scarlet is
 Against her little chin, I wis,
 That then was but cold.
 No scarlet then her kirtle had
 And little gold about it sprad;

But her red mouth was always glad
 To kiss, albeit the eyes were sad
 With love they had to hold.

SECUNDUS MILES.

How ! old thief, thy wits are lame;
 To clip such it is no shame;
 I rede you in the devil's name,
 Ye come not here to make men game;
 By Termagaunt that maketh grame,
 I shall to-bete thine head.

Hic Diabolus capiat eum.

This knave hath sharp fingers, perfoy;
 Mahound you thank and keep away,
 And give you good knees to pray;
 What man hath no lust to play,
 The devil wring his ears, I say;
 There is no more but wellaway,
 For now am I dead.

KING DAVID.

Certes his mouth is wried and black,
 Full little pence be in his sack;
 This devil hath him by the back,
 It is no boot to lie.

NATHAN.

Sitteth now still and learn of me
 A little while and ye shall see
 The face of God's strength presently.
 All queens made as this Bersabe,
 All that were fair and foul ye be,
 Come hither; it am I.
Et hic omnes cantabunt.

HERODIAS.

I am the queen Herodias.
 This headband of my temples was
 King Herod's gold band woven m
 This broken dry staff in my hand
 Was the queen's staff of a great land
 Betwixen Perse and Samarie.
 For that one dancing of my feet,
 The fire is come in my green wh
 From one sea to the other

AHOLIBAH.

I am the queen Aholibah.
 My lips kissed dumb the word of Ah
 Sighed on strange lips grown sick
 thereby.
 God wrought to me my royal bed;

The inner work thereof was red,
 The outer work was ivory.
 My mouth's heat was the heat of flame
 For lust towards the kings that came
 With horsemen riding royally.

CLEOPATRA.

I am the queen of Ethiopie.
 Love bade my kissing eyelids ope
 That men beholding might praise love.
 My hair was wonderful and curled;
 My lips held fast the mouth o' the world
 To spoil the strength and speech there-
 of.
 The latter triumph in my breath
 Bowed down the beaten brows of death,
 Ashamed they had not wrath enough.

ABIHAIL.

I am the queen of Tyrians.
 My hair was glorious for twelve spans,
 That dried to loose dust afterward.
 My stature was a strong man's length:
 My neck was like a place of strength
 Built with white walls, even and hard.
 Like the first noise of rain leaves catch
 One from another, snatch by snatch,
 Is my praise, hissed against and marred.

AZUBAH.

I am the queen of Amorites.
 My face was like a place of lights
 With multitudes at festival.
 The glory of my gracious brows
 Was like God's house made glorious
 With colors upon either wall.
 Between my brows and hair there was
 A white space like a space of glass
 With golden candles over all.

AHOLAH.

I am the queen of Amalek.
 There was no tender touch or fleck
 To spoil my body or bared feet.
 My words were soft like dulcimers,
 And the first sweet of grape-flowers
 Made each side of my bosom sweet.
 My raiment was as tender fruit
 Whose rind smells sweet of spice-tree root,
 Bruised balm-blossom and budded
 wheat.

AHINOAM.

I am the queen Ahinoam.
 Like the throat of a soft slain lamb
 Was my throat, softer veined than his:
 My lips were as two grapes the sun
 Lays his whole weight of heat upon
 Like a mouth heavy with a kiss:
 My hair's pure purple a wrought fleece,
 My temples therein as a piece
 Of a pomegranate's cleaving is.

ATARAH.

I am the queen Sidonian.
 My face made faint the face of man,
 And strength was bound between my
 brows.
 Spikenard was hidden in my ships,
 Honey and wheat and myrrh in strips,
 White wools that shine as color does,
 Soft linen dyed upon the fold,
 Split spice and cores of scented gold,
 Cedar and broken calamus.

SEMI RAMIS.

I am the queen Semiramis.
 The whole world and the sea that is
 In fashion like a chrysopras,
 The noise of all men laboring,
 The priest's mouth tired through thanks-
 giving,
 The sound of love in the blood's pause,
 The strength of love in the blood's beat,
 All these were cast beneath my feet
 And all found lesser than I was.

HESIONE.

I am the queen Hesioné.
 The seasons that increased in me
 Made my face fairer than all men's.
 I had the summer in my hair;
 And all the pale gold autumn air
 Was as the habit of my sense.
 My body was as fire that shone;
 God's beauty that makes all things one
 Was one among my handmaidens.

CHRYSOTHEMIS.

I am the queen of Samothrace.
 God, making roses, made my face
 As a rose filled up full with red.
 My brows made sharp the straitened seas
 From Pontus to that Chersonese

Whereon the ebb'd Asian stream is
shed.

My hair was as sweet scent that drips;
Love's breath begun about my lips
Kindled the lips of people dead.

THOMYEIS.

I am the queen of Scythians.
My strength was like no strength of man's,
My face like day, my breast like
spring.

My fame was felt in the extreme land
That hath sunshine on the one hand
And on the other star-shining.
Yea, and the wine there fails of breath;
Yea, and their life is waste like death;
Yea, and there death is a glad thing.

HARHAS.

I am the queen of Anakim.
In the spent years whose speech is dim,
Whose raiment is the dust and death,
My stately body without stain
Shone as the shining race of rain
Whose hair a great wind scattereth,
Now hath God turned my lips to sighs,
Plucked off mine eyelids from mine eyes,
And sealed with seals my way of breath.

MYRRHA.

I am the queen Arabian.
The tears wherewith mine eyelids ran
Smelt like my perfumed eyelids' smell.
A harsh thirst made my soft mouth hard,
That ached with kisses afterward;
My brain rang like a beaten bell.
As tears on eyes, as fire on wood,
Sin fed upon my breath and blood,
Sin made my breasts subside and swell.

PASIPHIAE.

I am the queen Pasiphae.
Not all the pure clean-colored sea
Could cleanse or cool my yearning
veins;
Nor any root nor herb that grew,
Flag-leaves that let green water through,
Nor washing of the dews and rains.
From shame's pressed core I wrung the
sweet
Fruit's savour that was death to eat,
Whereof no seed but death remains.

SAPPHO.

I am the queen of Lesbians.
My love, that had no part in man's,
Was sweeter than all shape of sweet.
The intolerable infinite desire
Made my face pale like faded fire
When the ashen pyre falls through with
heat.
My blood was hot wan wine of love,
And my song's sound the sound thereof,
The sound of the delight of it.

MESSALINA.

I am the queen of Italy.
These were the signs God set on me;
A barren beauty subtle and sleek,
Curled carven hair, and cheeks worn wan
With fierce false lips of many a man,
Large temples where the blood ran
weak,
A mouth athirst and amorous
And hungering as the grave's mouth does
That, being an-hungered, cannot speak.

AMESTRIS.

I am the queen of Persians.
My breasts were lordlier than bright swans,
My body as amber fair and thin.
Strange flesh was given my lips for bread,
With poisonous hours my days were fed,
And my feet shod with adder-skin.
In Shushan toward Ecbatane
I wrought my joys with tears and pain,
My loves with blood and bitter sin.

EPIRATH.

I am the queen of Rephaim.
God, that some while refraineth him,
Made in the end a spoil of me.
My rumor was upon the world
As strong sound of swollen water hurled
Through porches of the straining sea.
My hair was like the flag-flower,
And my breasts carven goodlier
Than beryl with chalcedony.

PASITHEA.

I am the queen of Cypriotes.
Mine oarsmen, laboring with brown throats,
Sang of me many a tender thing.
My maidens, girdled loose and braced
With gold from bosom to white waist,

Praised me between their wool-combing.

All that praise Venus all night long
With lips like speech and lids like song
Praised me till song lost heart to sing.

ALACIEL.

I am the queen Alaciel.
My mouth was like that moist gold cell
Whereout the thickest honey drips
Mine eyes were as a grey-green sea;
The amorous blood that smote on me
Smote to my feet and finger-tips.
My throat was whiter than the dove.
Mine eyelids as the seals of love,
And as the doors of love my lips.

ERIGONE.

I am the queen Erigone
The wild wine shed as blood on me
Made my face brighter than a bride's.
My large lips had the old thirst of earth,
Mine arms the might of the old sea's girth
Bound round the whole world's iron
sides,
Within mine eyes and in mine ears
Were music and the wine of tears,
And light, and thunder of the tides.
Et hic exeat, et dicat Bersabe regina;

Alas, God, for thy great pity
And for the might that is in thee,
Behold, I woful Bersabe
Cry out with stoopings of my knee
And thy wrath laid and bound on me
Till I may see thy love.
Behold, Lord, this child is brown
Within me between bone and bone
To make me mother of a son,
Made of my body with strong moan;
There shall not be another one
That shall be made hereof.

KING DAVID.

Lord God, alas, what shall I sain?
Lo, thou art as an hundred men
Both to break and build again:
The wild ways thou makest plain,
Thine hands hold the hail and rain,
And thy fingers both grape and grain;
Of their largess we be all well fain,
And of their great pity;
The sun thou madest of good gold,

Of clean silver the moon cold,
All the great stars thou hast told
As thy cattle in thy fold
Every one by his name of old;
Wind and water thou hast in hold,

Both the land and the long sea;
Both the green sea and the land,
Lord God, thou hast in hand,
Both White water and grey sand;
Upon thy right or thy left hand
There is no man that may stand;

Lord, thou rue on me.
O wise Lord, if thou be keen
To note things amiss that been,
I am not worth a shell of bean
More than an old mare meagre and lean;
For all my wrong-doing with my queen,
It grew not of our hearties clean,

But it began of her body.
For it fell in the hot May
I stood within a paven way
Bult of fair bright stone, per fay,
That is as fire of night and day
And lighteth all my house.

Therein be neither stones nor sticks,
But for cubits five or six
There is most goodly sardonxy
And amber laid in rows
It goes round about my roofs,
(If ye list ye shall have proofs)
There is good space for horse and hoofs,
Plain and nothing perilous.

For the fair green weather's heat,
And for the smell of leaves sweet,
It is no marvel, well ye weet,
A man to waxen amorous
This I say now by my case
That spied forth of that royal place;
There I saw in no great space
Mine own sweet, both body and face,
Under the fresh boughs.

In a water that was there
She wesshe her goodly body bare
And dried it with her owen hair:
Both her arms and her knees fair,
Both bosom and brows;

Both shoulders and eke thighs
Tho she wesshe upon this wise;
Ever she sighed with little sighs,
And ever she gave God thank.
Yea, God wot I can well see yet
Both her breast and her sides all wet
And her long hair withouten let
Spread sideways like a drawing net;
Full dear bought and full far fet

Was that sweet thing there y-set:
 It were a hard thing to forget
 How both lips and eyen met,
 Breast and breath sank.
 So goodly a sight as there she was,
 Lying looking on her glass
 By wan water in green grass,
 Yet saw never man.
 So soft and great she was and bright
 With all her body waxen white,
 I woxe nigh blind to see the light
 Shed out of it to left and right;
 This bitter sin from that sweet sight
 Between us twain began.

NATHAN.

Now, sir, be merry anon,
 For ye shall have a full wise son,
 Goodly and great of flesh and bone;
 There shall no king be such an one,
 I swear by Godis rood.
 Therefore, lord, be merry here,
 And go to meat withouten fear,
 And hear a mass with goodly cheer;
 For to all folk ye shall be dear,
 And all folk of your blood.

Et tunc dicant Laudamus.

ST. DOROTHY.

It hath been seen and yet it shall be seen
 That out of tender mouths God's praise
 hath been
 Made perfect, and with wood and simple
 string
 He that played music sweet as shawm-
 playing
 To please himself with softness of all sound;
 And no small thing but hath been some-
 time found
 Full sweet of use, and no such humbleness
 But God hath bruised withal the sentences
 And evidence of wise men witnessing;
 No leaf that is so soft a hidden thing
 It never shall get sight of the great sun;
 The strength of ten has been the strength
 of one,
 And lowliness has waxed imperious.
 There was in Rome a man Theophilus
 Of right great blood and gracious ways,
 that had
 All noble fashions to make people glad
 And a soft life of pleasurable days;
 He was a goodly man for one to praise,
 Flawless and whole upward from foot to
 head;
 His arms were a red hawk that alway fed
 On a small bird with feathers gnawed upon,

Beaten and plucked about the bosom-bone
 Whereby a small round fleck like fire there
 was:
 They called it in their tongue lampadas;
 This was the banner of the lordly man.
 In many straits of sea and reaches wan
 Full of quick wind, and many a shaken
 firth,
 It had seen fighting days of either earth,
 Westward or east of waters Gaditane
 (This was the place of sea-rocks under Spain
 Called after the great praise of Hercules)
 And north beyond the washing Pontic seas,
 Far windy Russian places fabulous,
 And salt fierce tides of storm-swoln Bos-
 phorus.
 Now as this lord came straying in Rome
 town
 He saw a little lattice open down
 And after it a press of maidens' heads
 That sat upon their cold small quiet beds
 Talking, and played upon short-stringed
 lutes;
 And other some ground perfume out of roots
 Gathered by marvellous moons in Asia
 Saffron and aloes and wild cassia,
 Colored all through and smelling of the
 sun;

And over all these was a certain one
Clothed softly, with sweet herbs about her
hair

And bosom flowerful; her face more fair
Than sudden-singing April in soft lands;
Eyed like a gracious bird, and in both
hands

She held a psalter painted green and red.
This Theophile laughed at the heart, and
said;

Now God so help me hither and St. Paul,
As by the new time of their festival
I have good will to take this maid to wife.
And herewith fell to fancies of her life
And soft half-thoughts that ended suddenly.
This is man's guise to please himself, when
he

Shall not see one thing of his pleasant
things,

Nor with outwatch of many travailings
Come to be eased of the least pain he hath
For all his love and all his foolish wrath
And all the heavy manner of his mind.
Thus is he like a fisher fallen blind
That casts his nets across the boat awry
To strike the sea, but lo, he striketh dry
And plucks them back all broken for his
pain

And bites his beard and casts across again
And reaching wrong slips over in the sea.
So hath this man a strangled neck for fee,
For all his cost he chuckles in his throat.
This Theophile that little hereof wote
Laid wait to hear of her what she might be:
Men told him she had name of Dorothy,
And was a lady of a worthy house.
Thereat this knight grew inly glorious
That he should have a love so fair of place.
She was a maiden of most quiet face,
Tender of speech and had no hardihood
But was nigh feeble of her fearful blood;
Her mercy in her was so marvellous
From her least years, that seeing her school-
fellows

That read beside her stricken with a rod,
She would cry sore and say some word to
God

That he would ease her fellow of his pain.
There is no touch of sun or fallen rain
That ever fell on a more gracious thing.

In middle Rome there was in stone-
working

The church of Venus painted royally.
The chapels of it were some two or three,
In each of them her tabernacle was

And a wide window of six feet in glass
Colored with all her works in red and gold.
The altars had bright cloths and cups to
hold

The wine of Venus for the services,
Made out of honey and crushed wood-
berries

That shed sweet yellow through the thick
wet red,

That on high days was borne upon the head.
Of Venus' priest for any man to drink;
So that in drinking he should fall to think
On some fair face, and in the thought
thereof

Worship, and such should triumph in his
love.

For this soft wine that did such grace and
good

Was newtrans-shaped and mixed with love's
own blood,

That in the fighting Trojan time was bled;
For which came such a woe to Diomed
That he was stifled after in hard sea.

And some said that this wine-shedding
should be

Made of the falling of Adonis' blood,
That curled upon the thorns and broken
wood

And round the gold silk shoes on Venu's
feet;

The taste thereof was as hot honey sweet
And in the mouth ran soft and riotous.

This was the holiness of Venus' house.

It was their worship that in August days
Twelve maidens should go through their
Roman ways

Naked, and having gold across their brows.

And their hair twisted in short golden rows.
To minister to Venus in this wise :

And twelve men chosen in their companies.
To match these maidens by the altar-stair,
All in one habit, crowned upon the hair
Among these men was chosen Theophile.

This knight went out and prayed a little
while,

Holding queen Venus by her hands and
knees;

I will give thee twelve royal images
Cut in glad gold, with marvels of wrought
stone

For thy sweet priest to lean and pray upon,
Jasper and hyacinth and chrysopras,
And the strange Asian thalamite that was
Hidden twelve ages under heavy sea
Among the little sleepy pearls, to be

A shrine lit over with soft candle-flame
 Burning all night red as hot brows of shame,
 So thou wilt be my lady without sin.
 Goddess that art all gold outside and in,
 Help me to serve thee in thy holy way.
 Thou knowest, Love, that in my bearing day
 There shone a laughter in the singing stars
 Round the gold ceiled bride-bed wherein
 Mars

Touched thee and had thee in your kissing
 wise.

Now, therefore, sweet kiss thou my maiden's
 eyes

That they may open graciously towards me;
 And this new fashion of thy shrine shall be
 As soft with gold as thine own happy head.
 The goddess, that was painted with face
 red

Between two long green tumbled sides of
 sea,

Stooped her neck sideways, and spake
 pleasantly:

Thou shalt have grace as thou art thrall of
 mine.

And with this came a savor of shed wine
 And plucked-out petals from a rose's head:
 And softly with slow laughs of lip she said,
 Thou shalt have favor all thy days of me.

Then came Theophilus to Dorothy,
 Saying: O sweet, if one should strive or
 speak

Against God's ways, he gets a beaten cheek
 For all his wage and shame above all men,
 Therefore I have no will to turn again
 When God saith "go," lest a worse thing
 fall out.

Then she, misdoubting lest he went about
 To catch her wits, made answer somewhat
 thus:

I have no will, my lord Theophilus,
 To speak against this worthy word of yours;
 Knowing how God's will in all speech en-
 dures,

That save by grace there may no thing be
 said.

Then Theophilus waxed light from foot to
 head,

And softly fell upon this answering.

It is well seen you are a chosen thing

To do God service in his gracious way.

I will that you make haste and holiday

To go next year upon the Venus stair,

Covered none else, but crowned upon your
 hair,

And do the service that a maiden doth.

She said: but I titha ain Christ's maid were
 loth

To do this thing that hath such bitter name.
 Thereat his brows were beaten with sore
 shame

And he came off and said no other word.

Then his eyes chanced upon his banner-
 bird,

And he fell fingering at the staff of it

And laughed for wrath and stared between
 his feet.

And out of a chafed heart he spake as thus:

Lo how she japes at me Theophilus,

Feigning herself a fool and hard to love;

Yet in good time for all she boasteth of

She shall be like a little beaten bird.

And while his mouth was open in that word

He came upon the house Janiculum,

Where some went busily, and other some

Talked in the gate called the gate glorious.

The emperor, which was one Gabalus,

Sat over all and drank chill wine alone.

To whom is come Theophilus anon,

And said as thus: *Beau sire, Dieu vous aide,*

And afterward sat under him, and said

All this thing through as ye have wholly
 heard.

This Gabalus laughed thickly in his
 beard.

Yea, this is righteousness and maiden rule.

Truly, he said, a maid is but a fool.

And japed at them as one full villainous,

In a lewd wise, this heathen Gabalus,

And sent his men to bind her as he bade.

Thus have they taken Dorothy the maid,

And haled her forth as men hale pick-
 purses:

A little need God knows they had of this,

To hale her by her maiden gentle hair.

Thus went she lowly, making a soft prayer,

As one who stays the sweet wine in his
 mouth,

Murmuring with eased lips and is most
 loth

To have done wholly with the sweet of it.

Christ king, fair Christ, that knowest all
 men's wit

And all the feeble fashion of my ways,

O perfect God, that from all yesterdays

Abidest whole with morrows perfected,

I pray thee by thy mother's holy head

Thou help me to do right, that I not slip:

I have no speech nor strength upon my lip.

Except thou help me who art wise and
 sweet.

Do this too for those nails that clove thy feet,

Let me die maiden after many pains.

Though I be least among thy handmaidens,
Doubtless I shall take death more sweetly thus.

Now have they brought her to King
Gabalus,

Who laughed in all his throat some breathing-whiles.

By God, he said, if one should leap two miles,

He were not pained about the sides so much.

This were a soft thing for a man to touch.
Shall one so chafe that hath such little bones?

And shook his throat with thick and chucked moans

For laughter that she had such holiness.

What aileth thee, wilt thou do services

It were good fare to fare as Venus doth.

Then said this lady with her maiden mouth,

Shamefaced, and something paler in the cheek:

Now, sir, albeit my wit and will to speak

Give me no grace in sight of worthy men,

For all my shame yet know I this again,

I may not speak, nor after downlying

Rise up to take delight in lute-playing,

Nor sing nor sleep, nor sit and fold my hands,

But my soul in some measure understands

God's grace laid like a garment over me.

For this fair God that out of strong sharp sea

Lifted the shapely and green-colored land,

And hath the weight of heaven in his hand

As one might hold a bird, and under him

The heavy golden planets beam by beam

Building the feasting-chambers of his house,

And the large world he holdeth with his brows,

And with the light of them astonisheth

All place and time and face of life and death

And motion of the north wind and the south,

And is the sound within his angel's mouth
Of singing words and words of thanksgiving,

And is the color of the latter spring

And heat upon the summer and the sun,

And is beginning of all things begun

And gathers in him all things to their end,

And with the fingers of his hand doth bend
The stretched-out sides of heaven like a sail,

And with his breath he maketh the red pale

And fills with blood faint faces of men dead,

And with the sound between his lips are fed

Iron and fire and the white body of snow,

And blossom of all trees in places low,

And small bright herbs about the little hills,

And fruit pricked softly with birds' tender bills,

And flight of foam about green fields of sea,

And fourfold strength of the great winds that be

Moved always outward from beneath his feet,

And growth of grass and growth of sheaved wheat

And all green flower of goodly-growing lands;

And all these things he gathers with his hands

And covers all their beauty with his wings;
The same, even God that governs all these things,

Hath set my feet to be upon his ways.

Now therefore for no painfulness of days

I shall put off this service bound on me.

Also, fair sir, ye know this certainly,

How God was in his flesh full chaste and meek

And gave his face to shame, and either cheek

Gave up to smiting of men tyrannous.

And here with a great voice this Galabus

Cried out and said: By God's blood and his bones,

This were good game betwixen night and nones

For one to sit and hearken to such saws:

I were as lief fall in some big beast's jaws

As hear these women's jaw-teeth chattering;

By God a woman is the harder thing,

One may not put a hook into her mouth.

Now by St. Luke I am so sore adrouth

For all these saws I must needs drudge again.

But I pray God deliver all us men

From all such noise of women and their heat.

That is a noble scripture, well I weat,

That likens women to an empty can;

When God said that he was a full wise man.

I trow no man may blame him as for that.

And herewithal he drank a draught, and spat

And said: Now shall I make an end hereof.
Come near all men and hearken for God's
love,

And ye shall hear a jest or twain, God wot.
And spake as thus with mouth full thick and
hot;

But thou do this thou shalt be shortly slain.
Lo, sir, she said, this death and all this
pain

I take in penance of my bitter sins.
Yea, now, quoth Gabalus, this game begins.

Lo, without sin one shall not live a span.
Lo, this is she that would not look on man
Between her fingers folded in thwartwise.

See how shame hath smitten in her eyes
That was so clean she had not heard of
shame.

Certes, he said, by Gabalus my name,
This two years back I was not so well
pleased.

This were good mirth for sick men to be
eased

And rise up whole and laugh at hearing of.
I pray thee show us something of thy love.
Since thou wast maid thy gown is waxen
wide.

Yea, maid I am, she said, and somewhat
sighed,

As one who thought upon the low fair
house

Where she sat working, with soft bended
brows

Watching her threads, among the school-
maidens.

And she thought well now God hath brought
her thence

She should not come to sew her gold again.

Then cried King Gabalus upon his men
To have her forth and draw her with steel
gins.

And as a man hag-ridden beats and grins
And bends his body sidelong in his bed,
So wagged he with his body and knave's
head,

Gaping at her, and blowing with his breath.
And in good time he gat an evil death
Out of his lewdness with his cursed wives:
His bones were hewn asunder as with
knives

For his misliving, certes it is said.

But all the evil wrought upon this maid,
It were full hard for one to handle it.

For her soft blood was shed upon her feet,
And all her body's color bruised and faint.
But she, as one abiding God's great saint,

Spake not nor wept for all this travail hard.
Wherefore the king commanded afterward
To slay her presently in all men's sight.

And it was now an hour upon the night
And winter-time, and a few stars began.
The weather was yet feeble and all wan
For beating of a weighty wind and snow.
And she came walking in soft wise and
slow,

And many men with faces piteous.
Then came this heavy cursing Gabalus,
That swore full hard into his drunken beard;
And faintly after without any word
Came Theophile some paces off the king.
And in the middle of this wayfaring
Full tenderly beholding her he said:

There is no word of comfort with men
dead

Nor any face and color of things sweet;
But always with lean cheeks and lifted feet
These dead men lie all aching to the blood
With bitter cold, their brows withouten
hood

Beating for chill, their bodies swathed full
thin:

Alas, what hire shall any have herein
To give his life and get such bitterness?
Also the soul going forth bodiless
Is hurt with naked cold, and no man saith
If there be house or covering for death
To hide the soul that is discomforted.

Then she beholding him a little said:
Alas, fair lord, ye have no wit of this;
For on one side death is full poor of bliss
And as ye say full sharp of bone and lean:
But on the other side is good and green
And hath soft flower of tender-colored hair
Grown on his head, and a red mouth as
fair

As may be kissed with lips: thereto his
face

Is as God's face, and in a perfect place
Full of all sun and color of straight boughs
And waterheads about a painted house
That hath a mile of flowers either way
Outward from it, and blossom-grass of May
Thickening on many a side for length of
heat,

Hath God set death upon a noble seat
Covered with green and flowered in the
fold,

In likeness of a great king grown full old
And gentle with new temperance of blood;
And on his brows a purfled purple hood,
They may not carry any golden thing;

And plays some tune with subtle fingering
On a small cithern, full of tears and sleep
And heavy pleasure that is quick to weep
And sorrow with the honey in her mouth;
And for this might of music that he doth
Are all souls drawn toward him with great
love

And weep for sweetness of the noise thereof
And bow to him with worship of their
knees;

And all the field is thick with companies
Of fair-clothed men that play on shawms
and lutes

And gather honey of the yellow fruits
Between the branches waxen soft and wide;
And all this peace endures in either side
Of the green land, and God beholdeth all.
And this is girdled with a round fair wall
Made of red stone and cool with heavy
leaves

Grown out against it, and green blossom
cleaves

To the green chinks, and lesser wall-weed
sweet,

Kissing the crannies that are split with
heat,

And branches where the summer draws to
head.

And Theophile burnt in the cheek, and
said:

Yea, could one see it, this were marvellous.
I pray you, at your coming to this house,
Give me some leaf of all those tree-branches;
Seeing how so sharp and white our weather
is,

There is no green nor gracious red to see.

Yea, sir, she said, that shall I certainly.
And from her long sweet throat without a
fleck

Undid the gold, and through her stretched
out neck

The cold axe clove, and smote away her
head:

Out of her throat the tender blood full red
Fell suddenly through all her long soft hair.
And with good speed for hardness of the air
Each man departed to his house again.

Lo, as fair color in the face of men
At seed-time of their blood, or in such wise
As a thing seen increaseth in men's eyes,
Caught first far off by sickly fits of sight—
So a word said, if one shall hear aright,
Abides against the season of its growth.
This Theophile went slowly, as one doth
That is not sure for sickness of his feet;

And counting the white stonework of the
street,

Tears fell out of his eyes for wrath and love,
Making him weep more for the shame
thereof

Than for true pain: so went he half a mile.
And women mocked him, saying: Theo-
phile,

Lo, she is dead; what shall a women have
That loveth such an one? so Christ me save,
I were as lief to love a man new-hung.

Surely this man has bitten on his tongue,
This makes him sad and writhled in his face

And when they came upon the paven
place

That was called sometime the place amor-
ous,

There came a child before Theophilus,
Bearing a basket, and said suddenly:

Fair sir, this is my mistress Dorothy
That sends you gifts; and with this he was
gone.

In all this earth there is not such an one
For color and straight stature made so fair.
The tender growing gold of his pure hair
Was as wheat growing, and his mouth as
flame.

God called him Holy after his own name;
With gold cloth like fire burning he was
clad.

But for the fair green basket that he had,
It was filled up with heavy white and red;
Great roses stained still where the first rose
bled,

Burning at heart for shame their heart with-
holds:

And the sad color of strong marigolds
That have the sun to kiss their lips for
love;

The flower that Venus' hair is woven of,
The color of fair apples in the sun,
Late peaches gathered when the heat was
done

And the slain air got breath; and after these
The fair faint-headed poppies drunk with
ease,

And heaviness of hollow lilies red.

Then cried they all that saw these things,
and said

It was God's doing, and was marvellous.
And in brief while this knight Theophilus
Is waxen full of faith, and witnesseth
Before the king of God and love and death,
For which the king bade hang him pre-
sently.

A gallows of a goodly piece of tree
 This Gabalus hath made to hang him on.
 Forth of this world lo Theophile is gone
 With a wried neck, God give us better
 fare
 Than his that hath a twisted throat to wear;
 But truly for his love God hath him brought
 There where his heavy body grieves him
 nought
 Nor all the people plucking at his feet:

But in his face his lady's face is sweet,
 And through his lips her kissing lips are
 gone:
 God send him peace, and joy of such an one.
 This is the story of St. Dorothy.
 I will you of your mercy pray for me
 Because I wrote these sayings for your
 grace,
 That I may one day see her in the face.

THE TWO DREAMS.

(FROM BOCCACCIO.)

I WILL that if I say a heavy thing —
 Your tongues forgive me; seeing ye know
 that spring
 Has flecks and fits of pain to keep her
 sweet,
 And walks sometime with winter-bitten
 feet.
 Moreover it sounds often well to let
 One string, when ye play music, keep at
 fret
 The whole song through; one petal that is
 dead
 Confirms the roses, be they white or red;
 Dead sorrow is not sorrowful to hear
 As the thick noise that breaks mid weeping
 were;
 The sick sound aching in a lifted throat
 Turns to sharp silver of a perfect note;
 And though the rain falls often, and with
 rain
 Late autumn falls on the old red leaves like
 pain,
 I deem that God is not disquieted.
 Also while men are fed with wine and
 bread,
 They shall be fed with sorrow at his hand.
 There grew a rose-garden in Florence
 land

More fair than many all red summers
 through
 The leaves smelt sweet and sharp of rain,
 and blew
 Sideways with tender wind; and therein fell
 Sweet sound wherewith the green waxed
 audible,
 As a bird's will to sing disturbed his throat
 And set the sharp wings forward like a boat
 Pushed through soft water, moving his
 brown side
 Smooth-shapen as a maid's, and shook with
 pride
 His deep warm bosom, till the heavy sun's
 Set face of heat stopped all the songs at
 once.
 The ways were clean to walk and delicate;
 And when the windy white of March grew
 late,
 Before the trees took heart to face the sun
 With ravelled raiment of lean winter on,
 The roots were thick and hot with hollow
 grass.
 Some roods away a lordly house there
 was,
 Cool with broad courts and latticed passage
 wet
 From rush-flowers and lilies ripe to set, —

Sown close among the strewings of the
 floor;
 And either wall of the slow corridor
 Was dim with deep device of gracious
 things;
 Some angel's steady mouth and weight of
 wings
 Shut to the side; or Peter with straight stole
 And beard cut black against the aureole
 That spanned his head from nape to crown;
 thereby
 Mary's gold hair, thick to the girdle-tie
 Wherein was bound a child with tender
 feet;
 Or the broad cross with blood nigh brown
 on it.

Within this house a righteous lord abode,
 Ser Averardo; patient of his mood,
 And just of judgment; and to child he had
 A maid so sweet that her mere sight made
 glad

Men sorrowing, and unbound the brows of
 hate;

And where she came, the lips that pain
 made strait

Waxed warm and wide, and from untender
 grew

Tender as those that sleep brings patience to.
 Such long locks had she, that with knee
 to chin

She might have wrapped and warmed her
 feet therein.

Right seldom fell her face on weeping wise;
 Gold hair she had, and golden-colored
 eyes,

Filled with clear light and fire and large
 repose

Like a fair hound's; no man there is but
 knows

Her face was white, and thereto she was
 tall;

In no wise lacked there any praise at all
 To her most perfect and pure maidenhood;
 No sin I think there was in all her blood.

She, where a gold grate shut the roses in,
 Dwelt daily through deep summer weeks,
 through green

Flushed hours of rain upon the leaves;
 and there

Love made him room and space to worship
 her

With tender worship of bowed knees, and
 wrought

Such pleasure as the pained sense palates
 not

For weariness, but at one taste undoes
 The heart of its strong sweet, is ravenous
 Of all the hidden honey, words and sense
 Fail through the tune's imperious preval-
 ence.

In a poor house this lover kept apart,
 Long communing with patience next his
 heart

If love of his might move that face at all,
 Tuned evenwise with colors musical;
 Then after length of days he said thus:—

“ Love,
 For love's own sake and for the love there-
 of

Let no harsh words untune your gracious
 mood;

For good it were, if anything be good
 To comfort me in this pain's plague of
 mine;

Seeing thus, how neither sleep nor bread
 nor wine

Seems pleasant to me; only I know this,
 Love's ways are sharp for palms of piteous
 feet

To travel, but the end of such is sweet:
 Now do with me as seemeth you the best.”
 She mused a little, as one holds his guest
 By the hand musing, with her face borne
 down;

Then said; “ Yea, though such bitter seed
 be sown,

I have no more care of all that you have
 said;

Since if there is no sleep will bind your
 head,

Lo, I am fain to help you certainly;
 Christ knoweth, sir, if I would have you
 die;

There is no pleasure when a man is dead.”
 Thereat he kissed her hands and yellow
 head

And clipped her fair long body many times;
 I have no wit to shape in written rhymes
 A scantied tithe of this great joy they had

They were too near love's secret to be
 glad;

As whoso deems the core will surely melt
 From the warm fruit his lips caress, hath
 felt

Some bitter kernel where the teeth shut
 hard:

Or as sweet music sharpens afterward,
 Being half disrelished both for sharp and
 sweet;

As sea-water, having killed over-heat

In a man's body, chills it with faint ache;
 So their sense, burdened only for love's
 sake,
 Failed for pure love; yet so time served
 their wit,
 They saved each day some gold reserves of
 it,

Being wiser in love's riddle than such be
 Whom fragments feed with his chance
 charity.

All things felt sweet were felt sweet over-
 much;

The rose-thorn's prickles dangerous to
 touch,

And flecks of fire in the thin leaf-shadows;
 Too keen the breathed honey of the rose,
 Its red too harsh a weight on feasted eyes;
 They were so far gone in love's histories,
 Beyond all shape and color and mere breath
 Where pleasure has for kinsfolk sleep and
 death,

And strength of soul and body waxen blind
 For weariness, and flesh entailed with
 mind,

When the keen edge of sense foretasteth
 sin.

Even this green place the summer caught
 them in

Seemed half deflowered and sick with
 beaten leaves

In their strayed eyes; these gold flower-
 fumed eyes

Burnt out to make the sun's love offering,
 The midnight's prayer, the rose's thanks-
 giving,

The tree's weight burdening the strength-
 less air,

The shape of her stilled eyes, her colored
 hair,

Her body's balance from the moving feet—
 All this, found fair, lacked yet one grain of
 sweet

It had some warm weeks back: so perisheth
 On May's new lip the tender April breath:
 So those same walks the wind sowed lilies
 in

All April through, and all their latter kin
 Of languid leaves whereon the Autumn
 blows—

The dead red raiment of the last year's
 rose—

The last year's laurel, and the last year's
 love,

Fade, and grow things that death grows
 weary of.

What man will gather in red summer-time
 The fruit of some obscure and hoary rhyme
 Heard last midwinter, taste the heart in it,
 Mould the smooth semitones afresh, refit
 The fair limbs ruined, flush the dead blood
 through

With color, make all broken beauties new
 For love's new lesson—shall not such find
 pain

When the marred music laboring in his
 brain

Frets him with sweet sharp fragments, and
 lets slip

One word that might have satisfied his
 lip—

One touch that might put fire in all the
 chords?

This was her pain: to miss from all sweet
 words

Some taste of sound, diverse and delicate—
 Some speech the old love found out to
 compensate

For seasons of shut lips and drowsiness—
 Some grace, some word the old love found
 out to bless

Passionless months and undelighted weeks.
 The flowers had lost their summer-scented
 cheeks

Their lips were no more sweet than daily
 breath;

The year was plagued with instances of
 death.

So fell it, these were sitting in cool grass
 With leaves about, and many a bird there
 was

Where the green shadow thickest im-
 pleached

Soft fruit and writhen spray and blossom
 bleached

Dry in the sun or washed with rains to
 white:

Her girdle was pure silk, the bosom bright
 With purple as purple water and gold
 wrought in.

One branch had touched with dusk her lips
 and chin,

Made violet of the throat, abashed with
 shade

The breast's bright plaited work: but
 nothing frayed

The sun's large kiss on the luxurious hair.

Her beauty was new color to the air

And music to the silent many birds.

Love was an-hungered for some perfect
 words

To praise her with; but only her low name
 "Andrevuola" came thrice, and thrice put
 shame

In her clear cheek, so fruitful with new red
 That for pure love straightway shame's self
 was dead.

Then with lids gathered as who late had
 wept

She began saying: "I have so little slept
 My lids drowse now against the very sun;
 Yea, the brain aching with a dream begun
 Beats like a fitful blood; kiss but both
 brows,

And you shall pluck my thoughts grown
 dangerous

Al most away." He said thus, kissing them:
 O sole sweet thing that God is glad to
 name,

My one-gold gift, if dreams be sharp and
 sore

Shall not the waking time increase much
 more

With taste and sound, sweet eyesight or
 sweet scent?

Has any heat too hard and insolent
 Burnt bare the tender married leaves, un-
 done

The maiden grass shut under from the sun?
 Where in this world is room enough for
 pain?"

The feverish finger of love had touched
 again

Her lips with happier blood; the pain lay
 meek

In her fair face, nor altered lip nor cheek
 With pallor or with pulse; but in her mouth
 Love thirsted as a man wayfaring doth,
 Making it humble as weak hunger is.

She lay close to him, bade do this and this,
 Say that, sing thus: then almost weeping-
 ripe

Crouched, then laughed low. As one that
 fain would wipe

The old record out of old things done and
 dead,

She rose, she heaved her hands up, and
 waxed red

For wilful heart and blameless fear of
 blame;

Saying "Though my wits be weak, this is
 no shame

For a poor maid whom love so punisheth
 With heats of hesitation and stopped breath
 That with my dreams I live yet heavily
 For pure sad heart and faith's humility.

Now be not wroth and I will shew you
 this.

"Methought our lips upon their second
 kiss

Met in this place, and a fair day we had
 And fair soft leaves that waxed and were
 not sad

With shaken rain or bitten through with
 drouth;

When I, beholding ever how your mouth
 Waited for mine, the throat being fallen
 back.

Saw crawl thereout a live thing flaked with
 black

Specks of brute slime and leper-colored
 scale,

A devil's hide with foul flame-writhen grail
 Fashioned where hell's heat festers loath-
 somest;

And that brief speech may ease me of the
 rest,

Thus were you slain and eaten of the thing.
 My waked eyes felt the new day shuddering
 On their low lids, felt the whole east so
 beat,

Pant with close pulse of such a plague-
 struck heat,

As if the palpitating dawn drew breath
 For horror, breathing between life and
 death,

Till the sun sprang blood-bright and vio-
 lent."

So finishing, her soft strength wholly spent,
 She gazed each way, lest some brute-hooved
 thing,

The timeless travail of hell's childbearing,
 Should threat upon the sudden: whereat he,
 For relish of her tasted misery

And tender little thornprick of her pain,
 Laughed with mere love. What lover
 among men

But hath his sense fed sovereignly 'twixt
 whiles

With tears and covered eyelids and sick
 smiles

And soft disaster of a pained face?

What pain, established in so sweet a place,
 But the plucked leaf of it smells fragrantly?

What color burning man's wide-open eye
 But may be pleasurably seen? what sense

Keeps in its hot sharp extreme violence
 No savor of sweet things? The bereaved

blood
 And emptied flesh in their most broken
 mood

Fail not so wholly, famish not when thus
 Past honey keeps the starved lip covetous,
 Therefore this speech from a glad mouth
 began,
 Breathed in her tender hair and temples
 wan
 Like one prolonged kiss while the lips had
 breath:
 "Sleep, that abides in vassalage of death
 And in death's service wears out half his
 age,
 Hath his dreams full of deadly vassalage,
 Shadow and sound of things ungracious;
 Fair shallow faces, hooded bloodless brows,
 And mouths past kissing; yea, myself have
 had
 As harsh a dream as holds your eyelids sad.
 "This dream I tell you came three nights
 ago;
 In full mid sleep I took a whim to know
 How sweet things might be; so I turned
 and thought;
 But save my dream all sweet availed me
 not.
 First came a smell of pounded spice and
 scent
 Such as God ripens in some continent
 Of utmost amber in the Syrian sea;
 And breaths as though some costly rose
 could be
 Spoiled slowly, wasted by some bitter fire
 To burn the sweet out leaf by leaf, and tire
 The flower's poor heart with heat and
 waste, to make
 Strong magic for some perfumed woman's
 sake.
 Then a cool naked sense beneath my feet
 Of bud and blossom; and sound of veins
 that beat
 As if a lute should play of its own heart
 And fearfully, not smitten of either part;
 And all my blood it filled with sharp and
 sweet
 As gold swoln grain fills out the husked
 wheat;
 So I rose naked from the bed, and stood
 Counting the mobile measure in my blood
 Some pleasant while, and through each
 limb there came
 Swift little pleasures pungent as a flame,
 Felt in the thrilling flesh and veins as
 much
 As the outer curls that feel the comb's first
 touch
 Thrill to the roots and shiver as from fire;

And blind between my dream and my de-
 sire
 I seemed to stand and held my spirit still
 Lest this should cease. A child whose
 fingers spill
 Honey from cells forgotten of the bee
 Is less afraid to stir the hive and see
 Some wasp's bright back inside, than I to
 feel
 Some finger-touch disturb the flesh like
 steel.
 I prayed thus; Let me catch a secret here
 So sweet, it sharpens the sweet taste of
 fear
 And takes the mouth with edge of wine; I
 would
 Have here some color and smooth shape as
 good
 As those in heaven whom the chief garden
 hides
 With low grape-blossom veiling their white
 sides
 And lesser tendrils that so bind and blind
 Their eyes and feet, that if one come
 behind
 To touch their hair they see not, neither
 fly;
 This would I see in heaven and not die.
 So praying; I had nigh cried out and knelt,
 So wholly my prayer filled me: till I felt
 In the dumb night's warm weight of glow-
 ing gloom
 Somewhat that altered all my sleeping-
 room,
 And made it like a green low place wherein
 Maids mix to bathe: one sets her small
 warm chin
 Against a ripple that the angry pearl
 May flow like flame about her: the next
 curl
 Dips in some eddy colored of the sun
 To wash the dust well out; another one
 Holds a straight ankle in her hand and
 swings
 With lavish body sidelong, so that rings
 Of fierce sweet water, swollen and splendid,
 fail
 All round her fine and floated body pale,
 Swayed flower fashion, and her balanced
 side
 Swerved edgeways lets the weight of water
 slide,
 As taken in some underflow of sea
 Swerves the banked gold of sea-flowers;
 but she

Pulls down some branch to keep her perfect head

Clear of the river: even from wall to bed,
I tell you, was my room transfigured so.
Sweet, green and warm it was, nor could
one know

If there were walls or leaves, or if there was
No bed's green curtain, but mere gentle
grass.

There were set also hard against the feet
Gold plates with honey and green grapes
to eat,

With the cool water's noise to hear in
rhymes:

And a wind warmed me full of furze and
limes

And all hot sweets the heavy summer fills
To the round brim of smooth cup-shapen
hills:

Next the grave walking of a woman's feet
Made my veins hesitate, and gracious heat
Made thick the lids and leaden on mine
eyes:

And I thought ever, surely it were wise
Nor yet to see her: this may last (who
knows?)

Five minutes; the poor rose is twice a rose
Because it turns a face to her, the wind
Sings that way; hath this woman ever
sinned,

I wonder? as a boy with apple-rind,
I played with pleasures, made them to my
mind,

Changed each ere tasting. When she came
indeed,

First her hair touched me, then I grew to
feed

On the sense of her hand; her mouth at
last

Touched me between the cheek and lip
and past

Over my face with kisses here and there
Sown in and out across the eyes and hair.

Still I said nothing; till she set her face
More close and harder on the kissing-place,
And her mouth caught like a snake's mouth,
and stung

So faint and tenderly, the fang scarce
clung

More than a bird's foot: yet a wound it
grew,

A great one, let this red mark witness you
Under the left breast; and the stroke there-
of

So clove my sense that I woke out of love

And knew not what this dream was nor
had wit;

But now God knows if I have skill of it."
Hereat she laid one palm against her
lips

To stop their trembling; as when water
slips

Out of a beak-mouthed vessel with faint
noise

And chuckles in the narrow throat and
cloys

The carven rims with murmuring, so came
Words in her lips with no word right of
them,

A beaten speech thick and disconsolate,
Till his smile ceasing waxed compassionate

Of her sore fear that grew from anything—
The sound of the strong summer thickening

In heated leaves of the smooth apple-trees:
The day's breath felt about the ash-branches

And noises of the noon whose weight still
grew

On the hot heavy-headed flowers, and
drew

Their red mouths open till the rose-heart
ached;

For eastward all the crowding rose was
slaked

And soothed with shade: but westward all
its growth

Seemed to breathe hard with heat as a man
doth

Who feels his temples newly feverous.
And even with such motion in her brows

As that man hath in whom sick days begin,
She turned her throat and spake, her voice
being thin

As a sick man's, sudden and tremulous;
"Sweet, if this end be come indeed on us,

Let us love more;" and held his mouth
with hers.

As the first sound of flooded hill-waters
Is heard by people of the meadow-grass,

Or ever a wandering waif of ruin pass
With whirling stones and foam of the brown
stream

Flaked with fierce yellow: so beholding
him

She felt before tears came her eyelids wet,
Saw the face deadly thin where life was
yet,

Heard his throat's harsh last moan before
it clomb:

And he, with close mouth passionate and
dumb

Burned at her lips: so lay they without speech, Each grasping other, and the eyes of each Fed in the other's face: till suddenly He cried out with a little broken cry This word "O help me, sweet, I am but dead." And even so saying, the color of fair red Was gone out of his face, and his blood's beat Fell, and stark death made sharp his up- ward feet And pointed hands: and without moan he died. Pain smote her sudden in the brows and side, Strained her lips open and made burn her eyes: For the pure sharpness of her miseries She had no heart's pain, but mere body's wrack; But at the last her beaten blood drew back Slowly upon her face, and her stunned brows Suddenly grown aware and piteous Gathered themselves, her eyes shone, her hard breath Came as though one nigh dead came back from death; Her lips throbbed, and life trembled through her hair. And in brief while she thought to bury there The dead man that her love might lie with him In a sweet bed under the rose-roots dim And soft earth round the branched apple- trees,	Full of hushed heat and heavy with great ease, And no man entering divide him thence. Wherefore she bade one of her hand- maidens To be her help to do upon this wise. And saying so the tears out of her eyes Fell without noise and comforted her heart: Yea, her great pain eased of the sorest part Began to soften in her sense of it. There under all the little branches sweet The place was shapen of his burial; They shed thereon no thing funereal, But colored leaves of latter rose-blossom, Stems of soft grass, some withered red and some Fair and flesh-blooded; and spoil splendor Of marigold and great spent sunflower. And afterward she came back without word To her own house; two days went, and the third Went, and she showed her father of this thing. And for great grief of her soul's travailing He gave consent she should endure in peace Till her life's end; yea, till her time should cease, She should abide in fellowship of pain. And having lived a holy year or twain She died of pure waste heart and weariness. And for love's honor in her love's distress This word was written over her tomb's head; "Here dead she lieth, for whose sake Love is dead."
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AHOLIBAH.

In the beginning God made thee A woman well to look upon, Thy tender body as a tree Whereon cool wind hath always blown Till the clean branches be well grown.	There was none like thee in the land; The girls that were thy bondwomen Did bind thee with a purple band; Upon thy forehead, that all men, Should know thee for God's hand- maiden.
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Strange raiment clad thee like a bride,
 With silk to wear on hands and feet
 And plates of gold on either side:
 Wine made thee glad, and thou didst
 eat
 Honey, and choice of pleasant meat.

And fishers in the middle sea
 Did get thee sea-fish and sea-weeds
 In color like the robes on thee;
 And curious work of plaited reeds,
 And wools wherein live purple bleeds.

And round the edges of thy cup
 Men wrought thee marvels out of gold,
 Strong snakes with lean throats lifted up,
 Large eyes whereon the brows had
 hold,
 And scaly things their slime kept cold.

For thee they blew soft wind in flutes
 And ground sweet roots for cunning
 scent;
 Made slow because of many lutes,
 The wind among thy chambers went
 Wherein no light was violent.

God called thy name Aholibah,
 His tabernacle being in thee,
 A witness through waste Asia;
 Thou wert a tent sewn cunningly
 With gold and colors of the sea.

God gave thee gracious ministers
 And all their work who plait and
 weave:
 The cunning of embroiderers
 That sew the pillow to the sleeve,
 And likeness of all things that live.

Thy garments upon thee were fair
 With scarlet and with yellow thread;
 Also the weaving of thine hair
 Was as fine gold upon thy head,
 And thy silk shoes were sewn with red.

All sweet things he bade sift, and ground
 As a man grindeth wheat in mills
 With strong wheels alway going round;
 He gave thee corn, and grass that fills
 The cattle on a thousand hills.

The wine of many seasons fed
 Thy mouth, and made it fair and clean;
 Sweet oil was poured out on thy head
 And ran down like cool rain between
 The strait close locks it melted in.

The strong men and the captains knew
 Thy chambers wrought and fashioned
 With gold and covering of blue,
 And the blue raiment of thine head
 Who satest on a stately bed.

All these had on their garments wrought
 The shape of beasts and creeping
 things,
 The body that availeth not,
 Flat backs of worms and veined wings,
 And the lewd bulk that sleeps and
 stings.

Also the chosen of the years,
 The multitude being at ease,
 With sackbuts and with dulcimers
 And noise of shawms and psalteries
 Made mirth within the ears of these.

But as a common woman doth,
 Thou didst think evil and devise;
 The sweet smell of thy breast and mouth
 Thou madest as the harlot's wise,
 And there was painting on thine eyes.

Yea, in the woven guest-chamber
 And by the painted passages
 Where the strange gracious paintings were,
 State upon state of companies,
 There came on thee the lust of these.

Because of shapes on either wall
 Sea-colored from some rare blue shell
 At many a Tyrian interval,
 Horsemen on horses, girdled well,
 Delicate and desirable,

Thou saidest: I am sick of love:
 Stay me with flagons, comfort me
 With apples for my pain thereof
 Till my hands gather in his tree
 That fruit wherein my lips would be.

Yea, saidest thou, I will go up
 When there is no more shade than one
 May cover with a hollow cup,
 And make my bed against the sun
 Till my blood's violence be done.

Thy mouth was leant upon the wall
 Against the painted mouth, thy chin
 Touched the har's painted curve and fall;
 Thy deep throat, fallen lax and thin,
 Worked as the blood's beat worked
 therein.

Therefore, O thou Aholibah,
 God is not glad because of thee;
 And thy fine gold shall pass away
 Like those fair coins of ore that be
 Washed over by the middle sea.

Then will one make thy body bare
 To strip it of all gracious things,
 And pluck the cover from thine hair,
 And break the gift of many kings,
 Thy wrist-rings and thine ankle-rings.

Likewise the man whose body joins
 To thy smooth body, as was said,
 Who hath a girdle on his loins
 And dyed attire upon his head—
 The same who, seeing, worshipped,

Because thy face was like the face
 Of a clean maiden that smells sweet,
 Because thy gait was as the pace
 Of one that opens not her feet
 And is not heard within the street—

Even he, O thou Aholibah,
 Made separate from thy desire,
 Shall cut thy nose and ears away
 And bruise thee for thy body's hire
 And burn the residue with fire.

Then shall the heathen people say
 The multitude being at ease;
 Lo, this is that Aholibah
 Whose name was blown among strange
 seas,
 Grown old with soft adulteries.

Also her bed was made of green,
 Her windows beautiful for glass
 That she had made her bed between:
 Yea, for pure lust her body was
 Made like white summer-colored grass.

Her raiment was a strong man's spoil;
 Upon a table by a bed
 She set mine incense and mine oil
 To be the beauty of her head
 In chambers walled about with red.

Also between the walls she had
 Fair faces of strong men portrayed;
 All girded round the loins, and clad
 With several cloths of woven braid
 And garments marvellously made.

Therefore the wrath of God shall be
 Set as a watch upon her way;
 And whoso findeth by the sea
 Blown dust of bones will hardly say
 I his were that Aholibah.

LOVE AND SLEEP.

LYING asleep between the strokes of night
 I saw my love lean over my sad bed,
 Pale as the duskiest lily's leaf or head,
 Smooth-skinned and dark, with bare throat
 made to bite,
 Too wan for blushing and too warm for
 white,
 But perfect-colored without white or red.
 And her lips opened amorously, and
 said—
 I wist not what, saving one word—De-
 light.

And all her face was honey to my mouth,
 And all her body pasture to mine eyes;
 The long lithe arms and hotter hands
 than fire,
 The quivering flanks, hair smelling of the
 south,
 The bright light feet, the splendid supple
 thighs
 And glittering eyelids of my soul's
 desire.

MADONNA MIA.

UNDER green apple boughs
That never a storm will rouse,
My lady hath her house
Between two bowers;
In either of the twain
Red roses full of rain;
She hath for bondwomen
All kind of flowers.

She hath no handmaid fair
To draw her curled gold hair
Through rings of gold that bear
Her whole hair's weight:
She hath no maids to stand
Gold-clothed on either hand;
In all the great green land
None is so great.

She hath no more to wear
But one white hood of vair
Drawn over eyes and hair,
Wrought with strange gold,
Made for some great queen's head,
Some fair great queen since dead;
And one strait gown of red
Against the cold.

Beneath her eyelids deep
Love lying seems asleep,
Love, swift to wake, to weep,
To laugh to gaze:
Her breasts are like white birds,
And all her gracious words
As water-grass to herds
In the June-days.

To her all dews that fall
And rains are musical;
Her flowers are fed from all,
Her joys from these;
In the deep-feathered firs
Their gift of joy is hers,
In the least breath that stirs
Across the trees.

She grows with greenest leaves
Ripens with reddest sheaves,
Forgets, remembers, grieves,
And is not sad;
The quiet lands and skies
Leave light upon her eyes;
None knows her, weak or wise,
Or tired or glad.

None knows, none understands,
What flowers are like her hands;
Though you should search all lands
Wherein time grows,
What snows are like her feet,
Though his eyes burn with heat
Through gazing on my sweet,
Yet no man knows.

Only this thing is said;
That white and gold and red,
God's three chief words, man's bread
And oil and wine,
Were given her for dowers.
And kingdom of all hours,
And grace of goodly flowers
And various vine.

This is my lady's praise:
God after many days
Wrought her in unknown ways,
In sunset lands;
This was my lady's birth;
God gave her might and mirth
And laid his whole sweet earth
Between her hands.

Under deep apple-boughs
My lady hath her house;
She wears upon her brows
The flower thereof;
All saying but what God saith
To her is as vain breath;
She is more strong than death,
Being strong as love.

THE KING'S DAUGHTER.

We were ten maidens in the green corn,
 Small red leaves in the mill-water;
 Fairer maidens never were born,
 Apples of gold for the king's daughter.

We were ten maidens by a well-head,
 Small white birds in the mill-water:
 Sweeter maidens never were wed,
 Rings of red for the king's daughter.

The first to spin, the second to sing,
 Seeds of wheat in the mill-water;
 The third may was a goodly thing,
 White bread and brown for the king's daughter.

The fourth to sew and the fifth to play,
 Fair green weed in the mill-water;
 The sixth may was a goodly may,
 White wine and red for the king's daughter.

The seventh to woo, the eighth to wed,
 Fair thin reeds in the mill-water;
 The ninth had gold work on her head,
 Honey in the comb for the king's daughter.

The ninth had gold work round her hair,
 Fallen flowers in the mill-water;
 The tenth may was goodly and fair,
 Golden gloves for the king's daughter.

We were ten maidens in a field green,
 Fallen fruit in the mill-water;
 Fairer maidens never have been,
 Golden sleeves for the king's daughter.

By there comes the king's young son,
 A little wind in the mill-water;
 "Out of ten maidens ye'll grant me one,"
 A crown of red for the king's daughter.

"Out of ten mayes ye'll give me the best,"
 A little rain in the mill-water;
 A bed of yellow straw for all the rest,
 A bed of gold for the king's daughter.

He's ta'en put the goodliest,
 Rain that rains in the mill-water;
 A comb of yellow shell for all the rest,
 A comb of gold for the king's daughter.

He's made her bed to the goodliest,
 Wind and hail in the mill-water:
 A grass girdle for all the rest,
 A girdle of arms for the king's daughter.

He's set his heart to the goodliest,
 Snow that snows in the mill-water;
 Nine little kisses for all the rest,
 An hundredfold for the king's daughter.

He's ta'en his leave at the goodliest,
 Broken boats in the mill-water;
 Golden gifts for all the rest,
 Sorrow of heart for the king's daughter.

"Ye'll make a grave for my fair body,"
 Running rain in the mill-water;
 "And ye'll streek my brother at the side of me,"
 The pains of hell for the king's daughter.

AFTER DEATH.

THE four boards of the coffin lid
 Heard all the dead men did.

The first curse was in his mouth,
 Made of grave's mould and deadly drouth.

The next curse was in his head,
 Made of God's work discomfited.

The next curse was in his hands,
 Made out of two grave-bands. ✓

The next curse was in his feet,
Made out of a grave-sheet.

"I had fair coins red and white,
And my name was as great light.

I had fair clothes green and red,
And strong gold bound round my head.

But no meat comes in my mouth,
Now I fare as the worm doth;

And no gold binds in my hair,
Now I fare as the blind fare,

My live thews were of great strength,
Now I am waxen a span's length;

My live sides were full of lust,
Now are they dried with dust."

The first board spake and said:
"Is it best eating flesh or bread?"

The second answered it:
"Is wine or honey the more sweet?"

The third board spake and said:
"Is red gold worth a girl's gold head?"

The fourth made answer thus:
"All these things are as one with us."

The dead man asked of them:

"Is the green land stained brown with
flame?

Have they hewn my son for beasts to eat,
And my wife's body for beasts' meat?

Have they boiled my maid in a brass pan,
And built a gallows to hang my man?"

The boards said to him:

"This is a lewd thing that ye deem.

Your wife has gotten a golden bed,
All the sheets are sewn with red.

Your son has gotten a coat of silk,
The sleeves are soft as curded milk.

Your maid has gotten a kirtle new,
All the skirt has braids of blue.

Your man has gotten both ring and glove,
Wrought well for eyes to love."

The dead man answered thus:

"What good gift shall God give us?"

The boards answered him anon:

"Flesh to feed hell's worm upon."

MAY JANET.

(BRETON.)

"STAND up, stand up, thou May Janet,
And go to the wars with me."
He's drawn her by both hands
With her face against the sea.

"He that strews red shall gather white,
He that sows white reap red.
Before your face and my daughter's
Meet in a marriage bed.

"Gold coin shall grow in the yellow field,
Green corn in the green sea-water,
And red fruit grow of the rose's red,
Ere your fruit grow in her."

"But I shall have her by land," he said,
"Or I shall have her by sea,
Or I shall have her by strong treason
And no grace go with me."

Her father's drawn her by both hands,
He's rent her gown from her,
He's ta'en the smock round her body,
Cast in the sea-water.

The captain's drawn her by both sides
Out of the fair green sea;
"Stand up, stand up, thou May Janet,
And come to the war with me."

The first town they came to
There was a blue bride-chamber;
He clothed her on with silk
And belted her with amber.

The second town they came to
The bridesmen feasted knee to knee;
He clothed her on with silver,
A stately thing to see.

The third town they came to
The bridesmaids all had gowns of gold;
He clothed her on with purple,
A rich thing to behold.

The last town they came to
He clothed her white and red,
With a green flag either side of her
And a gold flag overhead,

THE BLOODY SON.

(FINNISH.)

"O WHERE have ye been the morn sae late,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
O where have ye been the morn sae late?
And I wot I hae but anither."
"By the water-gate
O dear mither,"

"And whattin kin' o' wark had ye there to
make,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And whattin kin' o' wark had ye there to
make?
And I wot I hae but anither."
"I watered my steeds with water frae the
lake,
O dear mither."

"Why is your coat sae fouled the day
My merry son, come tell me hither?
Why is your coat sae fouled the day?

And I wot I hae but anither."
"The steeds wer stamping sair by the
weary banks of clay,
O dear mither."

"And where gat ye thae sleeves of red,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And where gat ye thae sleeves of red?
And I wot I hae but anither."
"I have slain my ae brither by the weary
water-head,
O dear mither."

"And where will ye gang to mak your
mend?
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And where will ye gang to mak your mend?
And I wot I hae not anither."
"The warldis way, to the warldis end,
O dear mither."

And what will ye leave your father dear,
 My merry son, come tell me hither?
 And what will ye leave your father dear?
 And I wot I hae not anither."
 "The wood to fell and the logs to bear,
 For he'll never see my body mair,
 O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your mither dear,
 My merry son, come tell me hither?
 And what will ye leave your mither dear?
 And I wot I hae not anither."
 "The wool to card and the wool to wear,
 For ye'll never see my body mair,
 O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave for your wife to
 take,
 My merry son, come tell me hither?
 And what will ye leave for your wife to
 take?
 And I wot I hae not anither."
 "A goodly gown and a fair new make,
 For she'll do nae mair for my body's sake,
 O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your young son
 fair,
 My merry son, come tell me hither?
 And what will ye leave your young son
 fair?
 And I wot ye hae not anither."
 "A twiggen school-rod for his body to bear,
 Though it garred him greet he'll get nae
 mair,
 O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your little daugh-
 ter sweet?
 My merry son, come tell me hither?"

And what will ye leave your little daughter
 sweet?
 And I wot ye hae not anither."
 "Wild mulberries for her mouth to eat,
 She'll get nae mair though it garred her
 greet,
 O dear mither."

"And when will ye come back frae roamin',
 My merry son, come tell me hither?
 And when will ye come back frae roamin'?
 And I wot I hae not anither."
 "When the sunrise out of the north is
 comen,
 O dear mither."

"When shall the sunrise on the north side
 be,
 My merry son, come tell me hither?
 When shall the sunrise on the north side
 be?
 And I wot I hae not anither."
 "When chuckie-stanes shall swim in the
 sea,
 O dear mither,"

"When shall stanes in the sea swim,
 My merry son, come tell me hither?
 When shall stanes in the sea swim?
 And I wot I hae not anither."
 "When birdies' feathers are as lead therein,
 O dear mither."

"When shall feathers be as lead,
 My merry son, come tell me hither?
 When shall feathers be as lead?
 And I wot I hae not anither."
 "When God shall judge between the quick
 and dead,
 O dear mither."

THE SEA-SWALLOWS.

THIS fell when Christmas lights were done,
 Red rose leaves will never make wine;
 But before the Easter lights begun;
 The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
 Tyne.

Two lovers sat where the rowan blows
 And all the grass is heavy and fine,
 By the gathering place of the sea-swallows
 When the wind brings them over Tyne.

Blossom of broom will never make bread,
 Red rose leaves will never make wine:
 Between her brows she is grown red,
 That was full white in the fields by Tyne.

"O what is this thing ye have on,
 Show me now, sweet daughter of mine?"
 "O father, this is my little son
 That I found hid in the sides of Tyne."

"O what will ye give my son to eat,
 Red rose leaves will never make wine?"
 "Fen-water and adder's meat,
 The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne,"

"Or what will ye get my son to wear,
 Red rose leaves will never make wine?"
 "A weed and a web of nettle's hair,
 The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne."

"Or what will ye take to line his bed,
 Red rose leaves will never make wine?"
 "Two black stones at the kirkwall's head,
 The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne."

"Or what will ye give my son for land,
 Red rose leaves will never make wine?"
 "Three girl's paces of red sand,
 The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne."

"Or what will ye give me for my son,
 Red rose leaves will never make wine?"
 "Six times to kiss his young mouth on,
 The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne."

"But what have ye done with the bearing-bread,
 And what have ye made with the washing-wine?"

Or where have ye made your bearing-bed,
 To bear a son in the sides of Tyne?"

"The bearing-bred is soft and new,
 There is no soil in the straining wine:
 The bed was made between green and blue,
 It stands full soft by the sides of Tyne."

"The fair grass was my bearing-bread,
 The well-water my washing-wine;
 The low leaves were my bearing-bed,
 And that was best in the sides of Tyne."

"O daughter, if ye have done this thing,
 I wot the greater grief is mine;
 This was a bitter child-bearing,
 When ye were got by the sides of Tyne."

"About the time of sea-swallows
 That fly full thick by six and nine,
 Ye'll have my body out of the house,
 To bury me by the sides of Tyne."

"Set nine stones by the wall for twain,
 Red rose leaves will never make wine;
 For the bed I take will measure ten,
 The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne."

"Tread twelve girl's paces out for three,
 Red rose leaves will never make wine;
 For the pit I made has taken me,
 The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne."

THE YEAR OF LOVE.

THERE were four loves that one by one,
 Following the seasons and the sun,
 Passed over without tears, and fell
 Away without farewell.

The first was made of gold and tears,
 The next of aspen-leaves and fears,
 The third of rose-boughs and rose-roots,
 The last love of strange fruits.

These were the four loves faded. Hold
Some minutes fast the time of gold
When our lips each way clung and clove
To a face full of love.

The tears inside our eyelids met,
Wrung forth with kissing, and wept wet
The faces cleaving each to each
Where the blood served for speech.

The second, with low patient brows
Bound under aspen-colored boughs
And eyes made strong and grave with sleep
And yet too weak to weep—

The third, with eager mouth at ease
Fed from late autumn honey, lees
Of scarce gold left in latter cells
With scattered flower-smells—

Hair sprinkled over with spoilt sweet
Of ruined roses, wrists and feet

Slight-swathed, as grassy girdled sheaves
Hold in stray poppy-leaves—

The fourth, with lips whereon has bled
Some great pale fruit's slow color, shed
From the rank bitter husk whence drips
Faint blood between her lips—

Made of the heat of whole great Junes
Burning the blue dark round their moons
(Each like a mown red marigold)
So hard the flame keeps hold—

These are burnt thoroughly away.
Only the first holds out a day
Beyond these latter loves that were
Made of mere heat and air.

And now the time is winterly
The first loves fades too: none will see,
When April warms the world anew,
The place wherein love grew.

DEDICATION.

1865.

THE sea gives her shells to the shingle,
The earth gives her streams to the sea;
They are many, but my gift is single,
My verses, the first fruits of me.
Let the wind take the green and the grey
leaf,
Cast forth without fruit upon air;
Take rose-leaf and vine-leaf and bay-leaf
Blown loose from the hair.

The night shakes them round me in legions
Dawn drives them before her like dreams;
Time sheds them like snows on strange
regions,
Swept shoreward on infinite streams;

Leaves pallid and sombre and ruddy,
Dead fruits of the fugitive years;
Some stained as with wine and made
bloody,
And come as with tears.

Some scattered in seven years' traces,
As they fell from the boy that was then;
Long left among idle green places,
Or gathered but now among men;
On seas full of wonder and peril,
Blown white round the capes of the
north;
Or in islands where myrtles are sterile
And loves bring not forth.

O daughters of dreams and of stories
 That life is not wearied of yet,
 Faustine, Fragoletta, Dolores,
 Félise and Yolande and Juliette,
 Shall I find you not still, shall I miss you,
 When sleep, that is true or that seems,
 Comes back to me hopeless to kiss you,
 O daughters of dreams.

They are past as a slumber that passes,
 As the dew of a dawn of old time:
 More frail than the shadows on glasses,
 More fleet than a wave or a rhyme.
 As the waves after ebb drawing seaward,
 When their hollows are full of the night,
 So the birds that flew singing to me-ward
 Recede out of sight.

The songs of dead seasons, that wander
 On wings of articulate words;
 Lost leaves that the shore-wind may squander,
 Light flocks of untameable birds;
 Some sang to me dreaming in class time
 And truant in hand as in tongue;
 For the youngest were born of boy's pas-
 time,
 The eldest are young.

Is there shelter while life in them lingers,
 Is there hearing for songs that recede,
 Tunes touched from a harp with men's
 fingers
 Or blown with boy's mouth in a reed ?
 Is there place in the land of your labor,
 Is there room in your world of delight,
 Where change has not sorrow for neighbor
 And day has not night ?

In their wings though the sea-wind yet
 quivers,
 Will you spare not a space for them there
 Made green with the running of rivers
 And gracious with temperate air;
 In the fields and the turreted cities,
 That cover from sunshine and rain
 Fair passions and bountiful pities
 And loves without stain ?

In a land of clear colors and stories,
 In a region of shadowless hours,
 Where earth has a garment of glories
 And a murmur of musical flowers;
 In woods where the spring half uncovers
 The flush of her amorous face,
 By the waters that listen for lovers,
 For these is there place ?

For the song-birds of sorrow, that muffle
 Their music as clouds do their fire:
 For the storm-birds of passion, that ruffle
 Wild wings in a wind of desire;
 In the stream of the storm as it settles
 Blown seaward, borne far from the sun,
 Shaken loose on the darkness like petals
 Dropt one after one ?

Though the world of your hands be more
 gracious
 And lovelier in lordship of things
 Clothed round by sweet art with the
 spacious
 Warm heaven of her imminent wings,
 Let them enter, unfledged and nigh fainting,
 For the love of old loves and lost times;
 And receive in your palace of painting
 This revel of rhymes.

Though the seasons of man full of losses
 Make empty the years full of youth,
 If but one thing be constant in crosses,
 Change lays not her hand upon truth;
 Hopes die, and their tombs are for token
 That the grief as the joy of them ends
 Ere time that breaks all men has broken
 The faith between friends.

Though the many lights dwindle to one
 light,
 There is help if the heaven has one;
 Though the skies be disrowned of the
 sunlight
 And the earth dispossessed of the sun,
 They have moonlight and sleep for repay-
 ment,
 When, refreshed as a bride and set free
 With stars and sea-winds in her raiment,
 Night sinks on the sea.

THE QUEEN-MOTHER.

— + : O : + —

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

TO

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

CHARLES IX.
 HENRY, King of Navarre,
 GASPARD DE SAULX, Marshal of
 Tavannes,
 HENRY, Duke of Guise,
 PIERRE DE BOURDEILLES, Abbé
 de Brantôme,
 The Admiral COLIGNY,
 M. DE LA NOUE,
 M. DE TELIGNY,
 M. DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD,
 M. DE MARSILLAC,
 M. DE SOUBISE,
 M. DE PARDAILLAN,
 CINO GALLI, Jester to the Queen-Mother.
 Two Captains.

} Catholic Nobles.

} Huguenot Nobles.

CATHERINE DE' MEDICI, Queen-Mother.
 MARGARET, Queen of Navarre.
 CLAUDE, Duchess of Lorraine.
 Duchess of Guise.

DENISE DE MAULEVRIER,
 YOLANDE DE MONTLITARD,
 ANNE DE SAULX,
 RENEE DE BARBEZIEUX,

} Maids of Honor.

Soldiers, People, Attendants, &c. Scene, Paris,
 Time, Aug. 22-24, 1572.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Environs of the Louvre.*

*Enter MARSILLAC, PARDAILLAN, SOUBISE
 and others, masked; the Duchess of Guise,
 and other Ladies.*

Marsillac.

NO, not the king, sir, but my lord of
 Guise;
 I know him by the setting of his neck,
 The mask is wried there.

PAR. Are not you the queen?
 By the head's turn you should be; your hair
 too

Has just the gold stamp of a crown on it,
 DUCH.—You do bispraise her by your
 scorn of me.

PAR.—Not the queen; then that hair's
 real gold of yours

And no white under?

SOU. Speak low, sirs; the king—
 See him there, down between the two big
 stems,

Wearing a rose, some damozel with him
 In the queen's colors.

MAR. Ill colors those to wear:
 I doubt some loose half of a Florentine,
 Clipt metal too.

PAR. Lower: they are close by this;
 Make space, I pray you; Christ how thick
 they get!

[*The Courtiers fall back.*]

*Enter the King and DENISE DE MAULE-
 VRIER.*

CH.—Why do you pluck your hands
 away from me?

Have I said evil? does it hurt you so
To let one love you?

DEN. Yea, hurts much, my lord.

CH.—Such soft small hands to hide in
mine like birds—

Poor child, she pulls so hard—hush now,
Denise,

The wrist will show a bruise, I doubt.

DEN. My wrist?
This is a knight, a man gilt head and feet,
And does such villanous things as that!

CH. Yea now,
Will you not weep too? will you cry for it?
So, there, keep quiet; let one loose the
mask;

Show me the rivet.

DEN. No, no, not the mask;
I pray you, sir—good love let be the clasp,
I will not show you—ah!

CH. So, so, I said
This was my lady, this one? let the rest
Go chatter like sick flies, the rest of them,
I have my gold-headed sweet bird by the
foot

To teach it words and feed it with my
mouth.

I would one had some silk to tie you with
Softer than a man's fingers be.

DEN. I too;
Your finger pinches like a trap that shuts.

CH.—Come, then, what penance do you
think to get

Now I have trapped you? No, my sweet
Denise,

No crying, no dear tears for it: no, love,
I am not angry. Why did you break from
me?

DEN.—Because I would not have a touch
of you

Upon me somewhere; or a word of yours
To make all music stupid in my ear.
The least kiss ever put upon your lips
Would throw me this side heaven, to live
there. What,

Am I to lose my better place i' the world,
Be stripped out of my girdled maiden's
gown

And clad loose for the winter's tooth to
hurt,

Because the man's a king, and I—see now,
There's no good in me, I have no wit at all;
I pray you by your mother's eyes, my lord,
Forbear me, let the foolish maiden go
That will not love you; masterdom of us

Gets no man praise: we are so more than
poor,

The dear'st of all our spoil would profit you
Less than mere losing; so most more than
weak

It were but shame for one to smite us, who
Could but weep louder.

CH. But Denise, poor sweet,
I mean you hurt, I smite you? by God's
head

I'd give you half my blood to wash your
feet. [*They pass.*]

DUCH.—To speak truth, I'm a German
offset, sir,

And no high woman; I was born in Cleves,
Where half the blood runs thick.

PAR.—Ay, with your tongue and head,
Tell me of German! your silk hair, madam,
Was spun in Paris, and your eyes that fill
The velvet slit i' the mask like two fair
lamps,
Set to shake spare gold loose about the
dark—

Tell me of German!

DUCH. See then in my hands;
You have good skill at palm-reading, my
lord?

PAR.—The glove smells sweet inside;
that's good to touch.

DUCH.—Give me my glove back.

PAR. By your hand, I will not.

DUCH.—There is no potency of oath in
that;

My hands are weak, sir.

PAR. By your eyes then, no.

DUCH.—I pray you, for your courtesy,
sweet lord,

Leave me the glove yet.

PAR. Bid me tear it first.

I'll wear this whether iron gird or silk,
Let snatch at it who will; and whoso doth,
I've a keen tongue ensheathed to answer
with.

DUCH. I do beseech you, not my glove,
fair sir,
For your dear honor,—could you have such
heart?

PAR.—Yea, truly; do but see me fasten it;
Nay, it drops; help me to set in the wrist.
The queen comes; I shall cross her sight
with this:

If you be woman, as you said, of hers,
It will make sharp the inward of her soul
To see it.

Enter the Queen-Mother, GUISE, and attendants; CINO GALLI, and Ladies, masked.

CA. So, Deniso is caught by this ;
Alack, the wolf's paw for the cat's, fair son !
That tall knight with a glove wrought
curiously,

Whose friend, think you ?

GUI. Some lady's here, no doubt ;
Not mine, as surely.

PAR. Not yours, my lord of Guise.

CA.—Your wife's glove, is it ? sewn with
silk throughout,
And some gold work, too ; her glove, cer-
tainly.

GUI.—Take no note of him, madam ; let
us go. [*They pass.*]

PAR.—You Catholics, her glove inside
my cap,
Look here, I tread it in the dirt: you,
Guise,

I tread a token under foot of mine
You would be glad to wear about the heart.
Here, madam, have it back; soiled in the
seam

Perhaps a little, but good enough to wear
For any Guise I see yet.

DUCH. I keep it for him.
Exit Duchess.

CINO.—If he be wise I am no fool. One
of you
Bid him come sup with me.

PAR. What fare, good fool ?

CINO.—A sacrament of eye-water and
rye-bread
Changed to mere foolish flesh and blood to
sup, sir.

Yolande.—Ware stakes, my Cino; is
this a head to roast ?

Think, my poor fool's tongue with a nail
through it,
Were it no pity ?

CINO. Fire goes out with rain, child.
I do but think, too, if I were burnt to-
morrow,

What a waste of salt would there be ! what
a ruin of silk stuff !

What sweet things would one have to hear
of me,

Being once got penitent ! Suppose you my
soul's father,

Here I come weeping, lame in the feet,
mine eyes big—

"Yea, my sin merely ! be it not writ
against me

How the very Devil in the shape of a cloth-
of-gold skirt

Lost me my soul with a mask, a most un-
gracious one,

A velvet riddle; and how he set a mark on
me,

A red mark, father, here where the halter
throttles,

See there, *Yolande* writ broad"; yet, for
all that,

The queen might have worn worse paint, if
it please you note me,

If her physic-seller had kept hands cleaner,
verily.

YOL.—Kind Cino ! dost not look to be
kissed for this now ?

CINO.—Be something modest, prithee: it
was never good time
Since the red ran out of the cheeks into the
lips.

You are not patient; to see how a good
man's beard

May be worn out among you !

ANNE. Virtuous Cino !

CINO.—Tell me the right way from a
fool to a woman,

I'll tell thee why I eat spiced meat on
Fridays.

YOL.—As many feet as take the world
twice round, sweet,

Ere the fool come to the woman.

CINO. I am mocked, verily;
None of these slippers but have lightened
heels.

I'll sit in a hole of the ground, and eat rank
berries.

YOL. Why, Cino ?

CINO.—Because I would not have a
swine's mouth

And eat sweetmeats as ye do. It is a
wonder in heaven

How women so nice-lipped, discreet of
palate,

Should be as easy for a thief to kiss
As for a king's son; like the common grass
That lets in any sun or rain, and wears
All favors the same way; it is a perfect
wonder.

YOL.—A stole for Cino; pray for me, Fra
Cino.

CINO.—Vex me not, woman; I renounce
the works of thee.

I'll give the serpent no meat, not my heel,

To sweeten his tooth on. I marvel how
 your mother
 Died of her apple, seeing her own sense
 was
 So more pernicious: the man got but lean
 parings,
 And yet they hang too thick for him to
 swallow.
 Well, for some three or four poor sakes of
 yours,
 I'll eat no honey.

ANNE.—Wherefore no honey, Cino?
 One saint ate honey before your head had
 eyes in it.

CINO.—I would not think of kissing,
 and it remembers me.
 Here are two scraps of Venus' nibbled
 meat;
 Keep out of the dish, as ye respect me,
 children,
 Let not love broil you on a gold spit for
 Sundays.

[*They retire.*]

Re-enter the King and DENISE.

CH.—Nay, as you will then.

DEN. Not for love indeed,
 Not for love only, but your own fair name,
 The costliness and very price of it,
 I am bold to talk thus with you. The
 queen, suspicious
 And tempered full of seasonable fears,
 Does partly work me into this; truth is it,
 There's no such holy secret but she knows
 As deep therein as any; all changes, hopes,
 Wherewith the seed-time of this year goes
 heavy,
 She holds and governs; and me, as all my
 fellows,
 Has she fed up with shreds and relics
 thrown
 From the full service and the board of time
 Where she sits guest, and sees the feast
 borne through;
 I have heard her say, with a sigh shaking
 her,
 There's none more bound to pray for you
 than she,
 And her you love not; and how sore it
 seems
 To see the poisons mingle in your mouth,
 And not to stay them.

CH.—Will she say that indeed?

DENISE, I think if she be wise and kindly,

And mixed of mother's very milk and love,
 She would not say so.

DEN. I have a fear in me
 She doubts your timely speed and spur of
 blood;

She thinks, being young, you shall but tax
 her care

And liberal grace with practice and weak
 tricks;

As thus say, you conceive of me, fair lord,
 As one set on and haled by golden will
 (Such lust of hire as many souls hath burnt
 Who wear no heat outside) to do you
 wrong,

To scourge and sting your lesser times with
 speech,

Trailing you over by some tender lies
 On the queen's party: which God doth well
 believe

To lie as far from me as snow from sun,
 Or hence to the round sea.

CH. There's no trick meant me?

DEN.—I pray, sir, think if I, so poor in
 wit

The times rebuke me, and myself could
 chide

With mine own heaviness of head, be fit
 To carry such a plot and spill none over
 To show the water's color I bear with me?
 All I lay care to is but talk of love,
 And put love from me I am emptier
 Than vessels broken in the use; I am sorry
 That where I would fain show some good,
 work somehow

To suit with reason, I am thrown out
 merely

And prove no help; all other women's
 praise

Makes part up of my blame, and things of
 least account

In them are all my praises. God help
 some!

If women so much loving were kept wise,
 It were a world to live in.

CH. Poor Denise,
 She loves not then so wisely? yea, sweet
 thing?

DEN.—Did I say that? nay, by God's
 light, my lord,

It was ill jested—was not—verily,
 I see not whether I spake truth or no.

CH.—Ay, you play both sides on me?

DEN. It may prove so.
 I am an ill player, for truly between times
 It turns my heart sick.

CH.—Fear when one plays false, then.
DEN.—As good play false when I make
play so hardly.

My hand is hurt, sir; I'll no more with you.

CH.—Will you so cheat me?

DEN.—Even so; God quit you, sir!
But pardon me; and yet no pardon, for
I'll have no stay to find it: were pardon at
my feet,

I would not bow to gather it. Farewell.

[Exit DENISE.]

CH.—Even so? but I'll have reason; eh,
sweet mouth?

But I'll have reason of her, my Denise;
How such can love one! all that pains to
talk!

What way ran out that rhyme I spun for
her?

To do just good to me, that talk! sweet
pains.

Yea, thus it fell: *Dieu dit*—yea, so it fell.

Dieu dit; Choisis; tu dois mourir;

Le monde vaut bien une femme.

L'amour passe et fait bien souffrir.

C'est ce que Dieu me dit, madame.

Moi, je dis à Dieu; Je ne veux,

Mon Dieu, que l'avoir dans ma couche,

La baiser dans ses beaux cheveux,

La baiser dans sa belle bouche.

[Exit the King.]

YOL.—Now, Cino?

CINO.—I am considering of that apple
still;

It hangs in the mouth yet sorely; I would
fain know too

Why nettles are not good to eat raw.
Come children,

Come, my sweet scraps; come, painted
pieces; come.

ANNE.—On after him; he is lean of
speech and moody;

Cunning for ill words at such winter-seasons
That come i' the snow like bitter berries.
On.

[Exunt.]

SCENE II. *In the Louvre.*

Enter King HENRY and MARGARET

MAR.—Yea, let him say his will.

HEN. I will not bear him.
His temperance grows half shame.

MAR. I doubt God hath
Fashioned our brother of like earth and
fire

As moulds you up; be patient; bear with
him

Some inches past your humor's mark.

HEN. Bear what?

By God I will have reason: tell me not;

I love you with the soundest nerve i' the
heart,

The cleanest part of blood in it; but him
Even to the sharpest edge and tooth of
hate

That blood doth war upon.

MAR. Keep in this chafe;
Put me in counsel with you.

HEN. It is no matter.

MAR.—I never saw yet how you love
and hate.

Are you turned bitter to me? all old words
Buried past reach for grief to feed upon

As on dead friends? nay, but if this be,
too,

Stand you my friend; there is no crown i'
the world

So good as patience; neither is any peace

That God puts in our lips to drink as wine,

More honey-pure, more worthy love's own
praise,

Than that sweet-souled endurance which
makes clean

The iron hands of anger. A man being
smitten

That washes his abused cheek with blood

Purges it nothing, gets no good at all,
But is twice punished, and his insult wears

A double color; for where but one red was
Another blots it over. Such mere heat

I' the brain and hand, even for a little stain,
A summer insolence and waspish wound,

Hurts honor to the heart, and makes that
rent

That none so gracious medicine made of
earth

Can heal and shut like patience. The
gentle God

That made us out of pain endurable

And childbirth comforts, willed but marked
therein

How life, being perfect, should keep even
hand

Between a suffering and a flattered sense,
Not fail for either.

HEN.—You do think sweetly of him;
But on this matter I could preach you out.

For see, God made us weak and marred
with shame

Our mixed conception, to this end that we

Should wear remembrance each alike, and
carry

Strait equal raiment of humility;

Not bare base cheeks for wrongs to spit
across,

Nor vex his print in us with such foul
colors

As would make bondsmen blush.

MAR. Let him slip wrong,
So you do reason: if such a half-king'd
man

Turn gross or wag lewd lips at you, for
that

Must anger strike as fool? 'T is not the
stamp,

The purity and record of true blood,
That makes Christ fair, but piteous humble-
ness,

Wherein God witnesses for him, no prince
Except a peasant and so poor a man
God gives him painful bread, and for all
wine

Doth, feed him on sharp salt of simple
tears

And bitter fast of blood.

HEN. Yea, well; yea, well;
And I am patient with you Catholics;
But this was God's sweet son, nothing like
me,

Who have to get my right and wear it
through

Unhelped of justice; all do me wrong but I,
And right I'll make me.

MAR. But all this wording-time
I am not perfect where this wrong began;
Last night it had no formal face to show,
That's now full-featured.

HEN. Ah! no matter, sweet;
Nothing, pure naught.

MAR.—Have you no shame then current
To pay this anger? Nay, as you are my
lord,

I'll pluck it out by the lips.

HEN. A breath, a threat,
A gesture, garment pulled this way; nothing.

MAR.—You do me wrong, sir, wrong.

HEN.—Well, thus then it fell out;
By God, though, when I turn to think
on it,

Shame takes me by the throat again; well,
thus.

King Charles, being red up to the eyes with
wine,

In the queen's garden, meeting me—as
chance.

Took me to walk six paces with some girl,
Some damozel the queen's choice dwells
upon,

Strayed somehow from the broader pres-
ence—

MAR. Well—

HEN.—I swear to you by faith and
faith's pure lip

That I know—that I did not hear her
name

Save of his mouth.

MAR. I did not ask her name.

HEN.—Nor do I well remember it; for-
give,

I think it was not—

MAR. Pass.

HEN. Alys de Saulx—

MAR.—Marshal Tavannes has no such
name akin.

HEN.—There's Anne de Saulx wears
longest hair of all;

A maid with gray grave eyes,—a right fair
thing;

Not she, I doubt me.

MAR. Worse for you, my lord.

HEN.—Ay, worse. Diane de Villequier
is tall—

MAR.—Are we at riddles?—Agnes de
Bacqueville?

HEN.—Some such name, surely; either
Chateauroux—

MAR.—Her name? as I am wedded
woman, sir,

I know you have it hidden in your mouth
Like sugar; tell me; take it on the lip.

HEN.—There was a D in it that kissed
an M.

MAR.—Denise? a white long woman
with thick hair,

Gold, where the sun comes?

HEN. Ay, to the ends clean gold.

MAR.—Yea, not the lightest thing she
has, that hair.

HEN.—You hold for true—

MAR. We have time to come for her.

Keep in your story.

HEN. Naught, mere naught to tell:
This just; the king comes, pulls her hand
from mine—

MAR.—Ah! no more shame?

HEN. No more in him than that;

Plucked her as hard—

MAR. As she was glad to go.

HEN.—Not so; she trembled to the feet,
went white,

Spoke hardly—

MAR.—Kept one hand of them your way.

HEN.—Charles caught her wrist up,
muttered next her ear,

Bade me leave care—

MAR. Nay, here's more fool than we.

Enter CINO.

CINO.—The world was a wise man when
he lived by bread only;

There be sweet tricks now. How does my
worthy sister?

MAR.—Not so much ill as to cease
thanks for it.

How does thy cap, fool?

CINO. Warm, I thank it, warm;
I need not wear it patched as much as faith.
I am fallen sick of heavy head; sad, sad;
I am as sick as Lent.

MAR. Dull, dull as dust;
Thou hadst some nerve i' the tongue.

CINO. Why, I am old.
This white fool three days older in my beard
Than is your wedding. But be not you cast
down;

For the mere sting is honorable in wedlock,
And the gall salve: therefore I say, praise
God.

HEN.—We do not catch thy sense.

CINO. Let my sense be;
I say I could weep off mine eye-cases,
But for pity of some ladies who would run
mad then.

Do not you meddle.

MAR.—What wisdom mak'st thou here?

CINO.—Why, a fool's wisdom, to change
wit with blocks.
You were late railing; were she that you
did gibe

Clean as her mother made, I tell you verily
The whitest point on you were grime and
soil

To her fair footsole.

MAR. Ay, but she's none such.

CINO.—I care not what she be; do you
not gibe,
I care no whit. Let her take twelve or six,
And waste the wicked'st part of time on
them,
She doth outstand you by ten elbow-
lengths.

HEN.—Hath love not played the knave
with this fool's eyes?

CINO.—Let that lie shut, and put you
thumb to lip;

For kings are bone and blood; put flesh
to that,

You have the rind and raiment of a man.

If you be wise, stay wise, even for my sake;
Learn to lie smooth, be piteous and
abashed,

And though dirt fall upon your faith and
you

Keep your ear sober, chide not with its
news,

And use endurance well; so shall he thrive,
That being a king doth crouch, and free
doth wive.

Farewell, fair king. [*Exit CINO.*

HEN. This fool is wried with wine.

MAR.—French air hath nipped his
brains; what ailed my mother
To have him north?

HEN. You bring her in my mind.

Have you no service on the queen to-day?

MAR.—I think she would lie privately;
she said

She was not well.

HEN. I pray you then with me.

MAR.—I will not with my lord of Par-
daillan;

You shall not break me with the king.

HEN. Men say
Guise hath some angry matter made with
him

That I would learn.

MAR. I am with you by the way;
I have some tricks to tell you of Denise.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *A Cabinet.*

*The Queen-Mother; DENISE dressing her
hair; TAVANNES.*

DEN.—Disait amour, voyant rire madame,
Qui me baisait dessous mes yeux un jour;
La rose est plus que fleur et moins que
femme,

Disait amour.

Disait amour; m'est peine eclore en âme;

Dieu veuille, hélas! qu'elle me baise un
jour.

Ayez merci, car jè souffre, madame,

Disait amour.

CA.—Set the gold higher. So, my lord
Tavannes,

You have no answer of the king?

TAV. Not I;
The Devil would give over such hard work,
I doubt, as you put me to.

CA. Ah well, well,
I thank you for it. Tie the next more
loose,

You prick my forehead through the hair,
Denise.

Strange, my lord marshal, I show less gray
spots

Than gold thread in it, surely. Five years
hence,

These girls will put a speckled silver on,
Because the queen's hair turns to dust-
color.

Eh, will not you, Denise?

DEN. If I wear white,
Gold must be out of purchase; I'll get gold
Or wear my head shorn flat, and vex no
combs.

CA.—You put sweet powders in your
own too much;

There, stoop down—you may kiss me if you
will—

I smell the spice and orris-root in it.

Fie, this will cheat your face, my poor
Denise;

This will bleach out the colors of your
blood,

And leave the hair half old. See you, lord
marshal,

This girl's was never soft and thick like
mine:

Mine was so good to feel once, I know well
Kings would have spent their lips in kiss-
ing it.

TAV.—I have poor judgment of girls'
hair and cheeks:

Most women doubtless have some gold and
red

Somewhere to handle, and for less or more
I care not greatly.

CA. Yea, I do well think once
I had such eyes as time did sleep in them,
And age forbear the purple at their lids;
And my mouth's curve has been a gracious
thing

For kisses to fall near: none will say now
That this was once. I may remember me
That Scotswoman did flee at my gray face;
I marvel now what sort of hair she has.

DEN.—The Queen of Scots lived gently
in repute:

She has much wrong.

CA.—Put not your judgment to 't:
The peril that enrings her place about
Is her own whetting. I do something
praise,

Yet hardly from the outside of my heart,
Our sister England; were I set like her,
I might look so.

TAV. Yea so? mere heretic?

CA.—Beseech you, pardon me; I am all
shame

That I so far misuse your holiness.

I know as you are sharp in continence
So are you hard in faith. Mark this, Denise,
These swording-men are holier things than
we;

These would put no kiss on, these would
not praise

A girl's hair—

TAV. Madam, do you jape at me;

CA.—Scarce let the wine turn in their
veins to blood;

Strangle the knowledge and the note of
sense,

Deny that worth; these eat no grosser meat
Than the cleanest water we dip fingers in;
Endure beyond the very touch of man,
Have none so soft use of the lip as makes it
Affect the natural way. Sir, is this true?

TAV.—Why, if men said you had more
teeth than hairs

They would just lie; and if they call me
that

They lie a something harder.

CA. Fie, my lord!

Your good wit to a woman's? will you say
The dog licks where it bit you, if I say
Forgive, Sir Gaspard, and be friends with
me?

Come, if I make you sit by me, fair knight,
And say the king had never half the wit
To choose you for his marshal? Ten years
back,

And may be clap some other tens on that,
I mind me well, sir, how you came up here
To serve at Paris; we had a right king
then,

King Francis, with his close black beard
and eyes

Near half as royal as your own, I think.

A fair page were you, and had yellow hair
That was all burnt since into brown; your
cheek

Had felt no weather pinch it or sun bite,
It was so red then: but you fought well, sir,
Always fought well; it was good game to
see

Your hand that swung round, getting weight
to throw,

Feeling for room to strike; Gaspard, by
God

I would have paid gold coin to turn a man
And get me bone to handle the good steel
And nerves to fight with; but I doubt me,
soon

I should have had the dust to roll into,
Though I were made six men to fight with
you,

Yet my arm ached for want of spears to
smite—

Eh? when you ran down that Mont-
gommery

That slew my lord with his side-prick i'
the eye?

Yea, surely; you were my best knight De
Saulx.

TAV. Madam—

CA.—Nay, Gaspard, when I lie of you
Then let your bit rasp at the mouth of me;
I speak poor truth; why, this Denise of
mine

Would give time up and turn her gold hair
gray

To have seen out the season we two saw.

DEN.—I would not; (*aside to Cath.*) my
lord marshal is too lean
To be a fair man.

CA. So, your glove for his?
We shall have larger passages of war
Except I look to it. Pray you, Denise,
Fetch me my glove,—my spice box,—any-
thing;

I will not trust you with my lord; make
in. [*Exit DENISE.*]

How like you her?

TAV. A costly picce of white;
Such perfumed heads can bear no weight
inside

I think, with all that waste of gold to bear
Plaited each way; their roots do choke
the brain.

CA.—There your sense errs; though she
be tender-made,

Yet is there so much heart in her as could
Wear danger out of patience. It is my
son I fear

Much more than I doubt her: the king my
son

Flutters not overmuch his female times
With love enough to hurt but turns and
takes,

Wears and lets go; yet if she springe him
once,

Click, quoth the gin; and there we trap
him. See,

This medicine I make out for him is sweet,
More soft to handle than a poppy's bud,
And pleasant as a scented mouth to kiss.

TAV.—Yea, I do see.

CA. Now at this turn of time

He is not perfect; and I have a mean
To bring him to our use. My lord of
Guise—

TAV.—Doth he make part of it?

CA. Fear you not him;

He is the blazen patched upon our cloth
To keep the pattern's gold. For the king's
self,

I have half possessed him of the deeds to be,
And he hath nothing blenched.

TAV. But, to this girl—

What way serves her in this?

CA. Being ignorant,

She does the better work; for her own
sake

Trails him my way, assures herself the
king

Would pluck the reddest secret from his
heart

To shew her, as you take the reddest rose
To smell at, if the color go by scent;
That's all her certainty. What foot is there?

TAV.—The king, and hastily.

CA. Keep you by me;

I know his cause. Let him come in.

Enter the King.

CH. Fair mother,

Good morrow come upon your majesty.

CA.—The morrow grows upon good
night, fair son;

That will salute me soon with sleep; you see
I keep not well.

CH. Ah, pale by God though, pale!

I'm sorry—sir, good morrow—hurt at heart.
Hear you my news? The admiral is hurt,
Touched in the side—I lie now, not the
side,

But his arm hurt—I know not verily,
But he is some way wounded.

CA. I am sorry

No goodness walks more clear. Sir, think
you not

That for a color—say a color, now—

CH.—I doubt you do not mean to visit
him?

CA. But I do mean; and if your leave
hold out

We'll bid the Guise with us.

CH. Have your best way:
Write me content thereof.

CA. I thank you, sir.
Lord marshal, you shall pray the Guise for us.

TAV.—Madam, I shall ; God keep your grace's health.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. *The Admiral's House.*

Enter COLIGNY and LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

LA R.—How do you yet, sir ?

CO. Ill, yea, very ill :
This snake has pricked me to the heart, to the quick,

To the keenest of it ; I believe heartily
I shall not live to foil them. God mend some!

For live or die, and wounded flesh or whole,
There will be hard things done ; we shall not see

Much more fair time.

LA R. Take better thoughts to you ;
The king is steady ; and the Guise wears eyes

Of such green anger and suspicious light
As cows his followers ; even the queen-mother

Walks slower than her wont, with mouth drawn up,

And pinches whiter her thin face, Tavannes
Goes chewing either lip's hair with his teeth,

Churning his bearded spite, and wears the red

Set on his cheek more steady ; the whole court

Flutters like birds before the rain begin,
Salcède, who hates no place in hell so much
As he loathes Guise, lets out his spleen at him

And wags his head more than its use was ; yea,

The main set draws our way now the steel bit

Keeps hard inside their mouths : yea, they pull straight.

CO. You lay too much upon them.

LA R. Not a whit over :
They are good men our side ; no dog laps i' the trough

So deep as we do ; the best men we have

That France has for us, the best mouths for a hunt,

To wind the quarry furthest ; then to these
A clean cause, friends with iron on the hand,

The king to head, no less.

CO. The king, no less ?
Yea, there's a dog gives tongue, and tongue enough,

Too hot I doubt, too hot ; strikes by the scent.

LA R.—Will you think so ? why there be dog-leashes ;

Pluck hard, you hold him. Come, I note you though ;

None sticks in your throat but Venus the old brach.

CO.—True, there she sticks, sir ; for your burden saith—

“ Brach's feet and witch's nose

Breathe which way the quarry blows.”

LA R.—She's old, sir, old ; the teeth drop, the smell wears ;

No breath in her by this.

CO. Enough to breath
The best of you that snuff about and yelp.
Who stops there in the street ? look out.

LA R. The king !
So get you ready ; Catherine here and all,
God save my wits a taking ! here you have them.

Enter the King, Queen-Mother, GUISE, and Attendants.

CH.—Do not rise up, sir ; pray you keep your place ;

Nay, now, by God's face, look, the cloak slips off ;

Nay, be more patient.

CO. Dear and gracious lord,
If you be pleased to look on my disease
As not my will, but a constraint to me
Less native than my garments, I have hope
You may forgive it.

CH. Yea, we do, we do.

CA.—It was not, sir, your sickness we took pains
To come and visit ; what's no friend of yours

Is even as our own felt infirmity,
And should be held so.

CH.—True sir, by God it should.

CA.—We therefore pray you have no care of that,

But as we do, respect it.

CH.

Do not, sir.

CO.—Madam, a sick man has not breath or tongue

To answer salutation of such worth;

But even the very blood that pain makes war on

Is healed and sound by this. From stronger heart

Than ere I saw you was in me, now touched And comforted by favor, I pay thanks

The best I have; and none so poor man pays

A rent of words more costly.

CA.

My fair lord,

This compliment has relish of more health Than was believed in you; I am most glad

That footless rumor which makes wing to go

Reports you something lesser than you seem;

So making keener with new spice to it.

Our very edge of pleasure, the fine taste

That waits on sudden sweetness. Sir, nathless,

No compliment it was we came to beg,

No aims of language and frayed garb o' the court

That makes no wear for men; but to do grace indeed

Rather to us than you, whose worth no friend

Can top with favor.

CO.—It shows the more love in you.

CA.—Also, my lord, for such poor part as mine,

I pray you be not jealous to receive

Assurance of me with how sore a hurt

Ill news of you made passage most unkind Into my knowledge; and with how dear a price

I would have bought a chance to succor you

Whose wound was sickness to me. So God love my son,

As I have put my prayer for your good hap Between two tears before him; yea, never shall he

Get worship of me but I'll speak of you As the leader of my loves, the captain friend

Among my nearest. Sir, the king knows well

How I speak of you; see now, let him say Whether I lie or no in loving you.

CH.—Ay, sir, there's no such day or night-season

But she holds to you, none but the admiral, That good lord, that best counsellor, strong ward

For any king to hang by; time has been, sir,

I have turned sick of hearing your grave name

So paddled over, handled so; my lord, There's no man, none in the world, my

mother mates with you

Save two, that's I and God.

GUI.

And that's a courtesy.

CO.—My lord of Guise, I saw you not; this day,

As men do shut the edges of a wound, Shuts the loud lips of our contention; sir,

This grace you do me shall keep fast my thanks

To your name always.

GUI.

It is the king's good will

I should be made the servant to his act. And what grace pleases him to bring me to

I take as title to me; this not least,

To call my poor name a friend's name of yours.

CO.—That makes mine honor.

CH.

It was this we came

To see made well up from the Guise to you My thought was ever there, yea, nailed to it,

Fastened upon it; it was my meat and sleep,

Prayer at feast-season and my fast at noon, To get this over.

CO.

It is well set now.

This hand is hurt I lay into your hand, But the love whole and the good will as sound

As shall the peace be for us.

GUI.

I take it so;

Maimed be that hand which first shall loosen it.

Even beyond healing.

CO.

Pardon, my fair lord,

I am but old, you strain my wrist too much.

CH.—Nay, you are worse hurt than they told us, then;

I pray you show me but the coat, I would, Fain see the coat where blood must stick of yours.

CO.—Sir, there it is.

CH.

Ay, no more red than this?

I thank you; was it this way the slit came?
Yes, so, I see; yea, sideways in the sleeve.
Is that the admiral's blood indeed? Me-
thinks,

Being issued from so famous veins as yours,
This should be redder. See, well above
the wrist;

See, madam; yea, meseems I smell the
stain.

CA.—It is an ill sight.

Co. I would give better, sir,
Spill the red residue some worthier way,
If you would heed, me. Trust not each in
all,

Nor sew your faith too thinly to men's
sleeves;

There is a poisonous faith that eats right
out

The sober and sweet heart of clean alle-
giance,

Leaving for witness of all royalty
Merely the baser flesh; beware of that.

CH.—I will.—Is not this like men's
blood?—I will.

Most like a common fool's; see you, lord
Guise,

Here's a great soldier has no blood more
worth

Than yours or mine. By God, how strange
is that,

It makes me marvel. Is your wound near
well?

Tush! no more hurt than shall a month
see out.

CA.—You have poor sense of sickness;
I fear much

Our friend shall hardly feed on the larger
air,

This two months hence. You must keep
close, dear lord,

I hide from the insolent and eager time
And we not wrong you by the overstay

Of foolish friendship, thankworthy in this,
That it knows when to cease, what limit
made

To measure its observance by. Farewell;
Think not worse of us that we trouble you,

But know we love you even too well to
buy

Our further speech with danger of your
hurt,

And had we sounder witness of our love
Would better prove it. Sir, God keep you
well

And give us joy to see you.

H

CH. Farewell, dear father;
Doubt not but we will lay a present hand
On one that hath so stricken us in you,
And he shall find us sharp. In trust of
that

Keep some thought of this poorest friend
you have,

As we of you shall. Trouble not yourself.
Nay, have your cloak on; so; God give you
help.

Come with me, my lord Guise; fair sir,
good night.

Yea, night it is now; God send you good
time of it.

[*Exeunt King, Queen-Mother, GUISE, &c.*]

Co.—Good thanks, sir, and farewell.—
So: gone, I think?

LA R.—Fair words go with them! you
have good time indeed;

What holidays of honey have they kept,
What a gold season of sentences to warm
by,

Even past all summer! a sweet oil-season,
Kept ripe with periods of late wine to
finish it!

Co.—Ay, the taste of them makes a
bitter lip, sir,

EA R.—Nay, mere feast-honey; did you
mark the Guise once,

How his chin twisted and got rough with
smiles,

Like a new cloth rained on? How the
nose was wried of him,

What widow's cheeks he had, never well
dried yet?

The sweet speech clung in his throat like
a kernel swallowed

In sucking cherries.

Co.—You are too loud yet, too splene-
tive.

LA R.—Tush! they are well gone, no
fear of them; but verily

I doubt you saw not how like a dog's his
face was,

A dog's you catch with meat in his teeth;
by Christ,

I thought he would have cried or cursed
outright,

His mouth so wrought.

Co. Yea, either had done well.

LA R.—A dog that snarls and shivers
with back down,

With fearful slaver about his mouth; "weh,
weh,

For God's sake, do not beat me, sirs !" eh,
Guise?—

With timid foam between his teeth; poor
beast, too,

I could be sorry for him.

Co. Be wise in time, sir.

And save your tears: this Guise has scope
to mend,

Get past these matters; I not doubt the
queen

Touches them with a finger-point of hers.

LA R.—The queen gets kind; she lessens
and goes out;

No woman holds a snake at breast so long,
But it must push its head between the plaits
And show across her throat's gold work.

Fair sir,
Cure but your doubt, your blood is whole
again

And pain washed out at once; it is the fret
of that

Which fevers you so far.

Co. This is not so.

I pray you mark; their fires are lit next
room,

The smoke bites in our eyelids, air turns
weak

And body trembles and breath sickens here.

Sir, I do know this danger to the heart,
To the shape and bone of it, the mouth and
eyes,

The place and time, season and conse-
quence;

By God's head, sir, now, this mere now,
this day,

The peril ripens like a wound o' the flesh
That gathers poison; and we sleepy things
Let crawl up to our feet the heats that will
Turn fire to burn.

LA R. Your wisdom is too loud;
Doth it fear truly some court-card, some
trick

That throws out honor ?

Co. Yea; for note me this,
These men so wholly hate us and so well
It would be honey to their lips, I think,
To have our death for the familiar word
They chatter between mass-time and the
bed

Wet with wine, scented with a harlot's
hair,

They lie so smooth in. When one hates
like that,

So many of them, each a hand and mouth
To stab and lie and pray and poison with,

The bloodsmell quickens in the head, the
scent

Feels gross upon the trail, and the steam
turns

Thicker i' the noses of the crew; right soon
Shall their feet smoke in the red pasturing-
place

And tongues lap hot; such cannot eat mere
grass

Nor will drink water.

LA R. Are we stalled for them ?

Are we their sheep? have we no steel?
dumb sheep?

Co.—No steel; the most of us have
watered blood,

Their nerves are threads of silk, their talk
such cries

As babies babble through the suckling
milk,

Put them by these.

LA R. I have a way to help;
A damsel of the queen-mother's loves me
More than her mistress; she has eyes to
kiss

That can see well; I'll get us help of her.

Co.—Tell her no word.

LA R. Yea, many words, I think.

Co.—No word, sir, none.

LA R. This riddle sticks, my lord.

Co.—To say we stand in fear is perilous
prate;

To kneel for help would maim us in the
feet,

So could we neither stand in time nor fly,
Being caught both ways. Do not you
speak with her.

LA R.—I'll make help somehow yet;
Yolande is good

And would not hurt us; a fair mouth too
small

To let lies in and learn broad tricks of
speech;

I'll get help, surely. Does not your wound
hurt?

Co.—Not much; I pray you draw my
cloak across;

So; the air chafes.

LA R. Go in and rest some while,
Your blood is hot even to the fingers.

Co. True;
I shall sleep ill. Come in with me, fair lord.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I. *The Louvre.**Enter King and DENISE.**Denise.*

NAY, I shall know it.

CH. Tush! you trouble me.

DEN.—O ay, I trouble you, my love's a thorn

To prick the patience of your flesh away
And maim your silenced periods of whole sleep.

I will unlearn that love; yea, presently.

CH.—What need I tell you?

DEN. Trouble not your lip;

I have no ear to carry the large news

That you shut up inside. Nay, go; nay, go;

It is mere pain, not love, that makes me dull;

Count not on love; be not assured of me;
Trust not a corner of the dangerous air
With some lean alms of speech; I may deceive you,I may wear wicked color in the soul
When the cheek keeps up red. Perchance I lie.

CH.—Thou art the prettiest wonder of God's craft;

I think thy mother made thee out of milk,
Thy talk is such a maiden yet. Stay there,
Are hands too costly for my fingering? ha?DEN.—Now I could kill you here between the eyes,
Plant the steel's bare chill where I set my mouth,

Or prick you somewhere under the left side;

Why, thou man's face of cunning, thou live doubt,

Thou mere suspicion walking with man's feet!

Yea, I could search thy veins about with steel

Till in no corner of thy crannied blood
Were left to run red witness of a man,
No breath to test thee kinglier than dead flesh,

Sooner than lose this face to touch, this hair

To twist new curls in, yea, prove me verily,
Sift passion pure to the blind edge of pain.

And see if I will—yet what need, what need?

Kiss me! there now, am I no queen for you?

Here, take my fingers to mould flat in yours
That would mould iron flat,—eh, would not they?

CH.—Ay, true, Denise, by God they can turn steel,

That's truth now,—turn it like a bit of paste

Paddled each way,—that's just short truth.

DEN. Well, now,

That I do pray you put some trust on me
For love's fair merit and faith's noble sake,
What holds your lips so fast? I should look proud,

Grave in the mouth, with wise accomplice eyes,

A piece of your great craft. Make place for me;

I pray you, place.

CH. This counsel is more grave
Than death's lean face; best your ear touch it not.

DEN.—Nay then I will not; for I would not pluck

So rough a knowledge on. I am a child,
A show, a bauble kissed and laughed across:You lay your face over my head and laugh,
Your slow laugh underbreath runs in my hair.Talk me of love, now; there I understand,
Catch comprehension at the skirt of love,
Steal alms of it. Yet I would put love off
And rather make the time hard cover to meThan miss trust utterly. But let that lie;
Therein walks danger with both eyes awake,

Therefore no more. Tell me not anything.

CH.—Thou shalt have all.

DEN. Must I put violence
To war upon my words? Have they said wrong?

I was resolved not to distemper you.

CH.—Nay, I shall try your trust. Sit by me, so;

Lay your hands thus. By God how fair you are,

It does amaze me; surely God felt glad
The day he finished making you. Eh, sweet,

You have the eyes men choose to paint,
you know:

And just that soft turn in the little throat
And bluish color in the lower lid
They make saints with.

DEN.—True. A grave thing to hear.

CH.—See yet, this matter you do fret
me with

Seems no whit necessary, nor hath such
weight,

Nor half the cost and value of a hair,
Poised with some perfect little wrath of
yours

In fret of brows or lifting of the lip.

Indeed you are too precious for man's use,
Being past so far his extreme point of
price,

His flawed and curious estimation,
As throws out all repute of words.

DEN.— I would
My face were writen like a witch! Make
forth.

CH.—Why, many a business feeds on
blood i' the world,
And there goes many a knave to make a
saint—

DEN.—I shall be angry. Sir, I am no
fool,

But you do treat me as a dog might fare
Coming too near the fire.

CH.— Nay, keep dry lids;
I would not lose you for three days, to
have

My place assured next God's. But see you
now,

This gracious town with its smooth ways
and walls

And men all mine in all of theirs—

DEN.— I see.

CH.—This France I have in fee as sure
as God,

Hath me and you,—if this should fall to
loss,

Were it no pity?

DEN.— Yea, sir, it were much.

CH.—Or now, this gold that makes me
up a king,

This apprehensive note and mark of time,
This token'd kingdom, this well-tested
worth,

Wherein my brows exult and are begirt
With the brave sum and sense of kingliness,
To have this melted from a narrow head
Or broken on the bare disfigured brows,
And marred i' the very figure and fair place

Where it looked nobly,—were this no
shame to us?

DEN.—Yea, this were piteous likewise.
CH.— Think on it.

For I would have you pitiful as tears,
Would have you fill with pity as the moon
With perfect round of seasonable gold
Fills her starved sides at point of the yellow
month;

For if you leave some foolish part, some
break,

Some idle piece or angle of yourself,
Not filled with wise and fearful pity up,
Then shame to hear the means of mine
effect

Shall change you stone for good.

DEN.— I apprehend.

CH.—For I, by God, when I turn
thought on it,

Do feel a heavy trembling in my sense,
An alteration and a full disease
As perilous things did jar in me and make
Contention in my blood.

DEN.— Nay, but speak more;
Speak forth. Good love, if I should flatter
you—

CH.—You see how hard and to what
sharp revolt

The labor of the barren times is grown
Not in France merely, but in either land
That feels the sea's salt insolence on it;
The womb is split and shaken everywhere
That earth gets life of; and the taint therein
Doth like a venomous drug incite and sting
The sore unhealed rebellion in its house
To extreme working. Now to supplant
this evil.

Doth ask more evil; men kiss not snakes
to death,

Nor have we heard of bodies plagued to
ache

Made whole with eating honey. It is most
good

That we should see how God doth physic
time

Even to the quick and the afflictive blood
With stripes as keen as iron in the flesh.

Therefore,—That is, you have to appre-
hend

I mean no evil, but a righteous help;
I hate blood, too; indeed I love it not
More than a girl does. Therefore it is hard.
Take note of me, I tell you it is hard.

DEN.—I see. Make on.

CH.— It was to bring all right,—

And these men break God's smooth endurance up,
 And he must hate them; and I love him so,
 I and all my friends, my mother here and all,
 It hurts us, doth us wrong, puts pain on us,
 When God forbears his cause to quit himself,
 And gives no sign aside.

DEN.— I may well think
 These are your Huguenots that you do loathe;
 You will do right upon them, will you not?
 CH.—Ay, right, I will do right, nothing but right.

You are my absolute mistress and my choice,

The top and pearl of all mine ornament,
 The golden and refined election
 Of all the treasures I set hands to; well,
 I do believe were you so mixed herein
 As many are, many that I keep dear,
 Dear and right precious in my just account,
 And I had such a promise in God's ear
 As I have now to see an end of these,
 I might renounce you too and give him leave

To make you parcel of the execution
 That shall be done on these.

DEN.— I fear you much;
 For I can smell the mother in your speech,
 This argument hath color of her eyes;
 Where learnt you it?

CH.— My brains do beat upon
 The month's full time. Which day it is I know not;

It should look red upon the calendar,
 And outblush its fierce use. The twenty-fourth of August,—

We stumble near it unawares by this;
 Give me the book.

DEN.— What are you strayed upon?

CH.—It is the time, the time,—you come too late

To tear its thread across.

DEN.— Pray you, what time?

CH.—But this Bartholomew shall be inscribed

Beyond the first; the latter speech of time
 Shall quench and make oblivious war upon
 The former and defeated memories,
 New histories teaching it. For there will be

Blood on the moist untimely lip of death,
 And in the dusty hunger of his bones

A sudden marrow shall refresh itself
 And spread to perfect sinew. There will stir

Even in the red and hollow heat of hell
 A motion of sharp spirit, a quickened sense

Such as wine makes in us; yea, such a day
 God hath not seen as I shall make for him.

DEN.—You put fear in me; I can feel my blood

Go white with hearing you.

CH.— We trap them all
 In a great gin where the soul sticks as well.

Nay, there's no hair of any Huguenot
 But makes up parcel of my work in blood,
 Nor face that is not painted with our swords.

(I told you this should hurt.) Oh, I could be

Most glad that I am taken to do this
 And show the eyes of this lean world and time

The mould and the strong model of a king,

Not in the halting likeness of an ape
 That fingers precious ware and knows it not,

From the teeth outward fool. Look you, I'll do't;

Nay, as God stands beyond us twain, I will.

First Paris,—note you, Paris helps in it,
 I stand not singly nerved, but in mine arm
 Have multiplied the sinew of all these;
 France helps in it: the Guise has word to go

And take our admiral's patience by the throat

And finish the half issue of his blood;
 See, this side goes Tavannes; here ride our men,

And here; no falcon starved to bones and beak

Is tempered keener than our citizen.

DEN.—You will not murder them?

CH.— Ay, will I not?

I pray you tell me, was this well devised?

DEN.—You are changed foul with it:
 nay, stand more off;

Was it your meaning?

CH.— Ay, mine; very mine;

I will not lose it.

DEN.— Doth my sense hold fast?

It is not possible you should do this

And scape the smell of blood. Nay, I but dream;

For if I wake, the substance of my flesh,
This form and fast impression of the air,
Yea, the most holy sun, are counterfeit;
We stick yards deeper than the foot of hell.
You see not well how foul a face you have,—
I will cry out on you.

CH.—Are you fallen mad?

DEN.—I will put proclamation in the wind
That where but any shape of breath shall blow
It shall sound harsh as murder. Do you think

God shall sit fast and blink at you?

CH.—What more?
Get on; I do not chide you; nay, get breath;

Spare me no whit.

DEN.—I hate you beyond death;
Somewhat I had to say; give ear to me.
—It is all lost now, spilt in water, runs
Into sick tears. Forgive me my loud words,

I have much erred against your gracious game,

Mistaking all of you; I do confess

This jest so said has proved me dull and thick;

Now say it was well played and let me go.
You have played well indeed, and such hard parts—

Now I shall slip into mad speech again
And fail myself.

CH.—What is it you will do?

DEN.—Alack, I see not that. Indeed I think

It is God's will to kill me first i' the brain
And after in the flesh. I am half mad.
But I can speak; yea surely, I can speak;
And I will cry in all the streets and make
Twinned correspondence 'twixt the tongued
Seine banks

With sound and breath, clamor and noise
of tears,

And windy witness of your enterprise.

O, you are moved now; keep on that better face

And I will find some weeping way to you,
Persuading sin to peace; you shall not do it;
Lest all the recollection of men's lips
And noise of all just times and everyplace
That hath but any shape of good on it
Be sharp on you forever.

Enter the Queen-Mother and GUISE.

CA.—So, you are loud,
I come betimes. Sir, if you spare me room,

I have two words to say.

CH.—I am bound to you;
You have care of me indeed. Bid her go in.

CA.—I would not be untimely.

CH.—No, you are not,
You are a gracious mother, a good help.

(*To DENISE.*) I'll see you soon at night.

DEN.—My lord, my lord—

CA.—Give my son breath at least; you are impatient;

It suits you not.

GUI.—(*To the King.*) I wait upon your highness.

CH.—We are bounden to you too. Madam, go in.

[*Exit DENISE.*]

CA.—My son, you put too large a face on this.

CH.—Mother, I put no face on it at all.
Come, pray you now, what do you look to get

By such a use of me?

CA.—You take strange ways
To chide me with; I did expect your good.

Always it is the plague of love to be
Thus mated by some check. I will go play;
Farewell.

CH.—Nay, now you shall not go. My lord,

Tell her I meant no shame, no red i' the cheek;

Say now I did not.

CA.—I am content enough.
You may well see why we are come to you.

CH.—Yea, that I see.

GUI.—The men are at full point;
Also the marshall helps us at all need
And some things over.

CA.—You turn jealous of him.
GUI.—Madam, I wear no envy on my words.

CA.—Sir, you are safe.—Truly I am so glad

Now this thing clears i' the working and comes straight,

I could well jest and laugh.

CH.—So could I not;
All's not squared yet; you are too hot on it.

CA.—Too hot am I? Sir, you much
 wrong your honor
 Taxing such heat in me; I have proof of you,
 So hath the Guise, that you have wrought
 herein

As hard as any.

GVI.— I take your part as mine
 For witness of my lord's free grace and will
 Towards this matter.

CH.— *This matter*,—call it so;
 Have you such honey in the mouth, my
 lord

To make a milky matter of the name?
 Why, if men are to call us murderers,
 Let's take the word up and not tell such
 lies,
 Skulking with beaten cheeks behind the
 word.

GVI.—(*Aside to Cath.*) He is touched
 the wrong side yet.

CA.—(*Aside to Guise.*) I have stung my-
 self;

This girl I set on him has thrown us out,
 Played her own way. That we should pay
 such apes
 To pinch us in the wrist!

CH.— What are you saying?

CA.—Take your best means: here's none
 shall cross you, sir.

We do but say if you will give them leave
 To slit your throat with whispering, or abed
 Take medicine of them,—or wear gloves
 of theirs,—

Or please your mouth with drinking after
 them,—

It is no matter.

CH.— Would you have me mad?
 I have not heard of such a tax on them,
 No, not since Florence taught us to use
 drugs

Has it been noised of these.

CA.— I think indeed
 That poison hath no Florence in the drug
 Which puts the peril of so hard a speech
 In my son's lips. Do not unsay it; no:
 I do not bid you take the blur from me.
 I am content to stay and take shame up
 So I may suit you. O sweet son,—my
 lord,

Forgive me that my tongue so slips on you,
 Catching the old name first,—I pray you
 note

That I can be as patient as your ear
 Hath been of me too long. This is the last
 That I shall ever take of words to push

Your just forbearance beyond use. I said
 "Farewell" as idly as one says "good
 thanks"

To him that hath not earned it: but I see
 Here is made room for a farewell indeed.
 Now could I take it silently and go,
 Turning my very passion to content
 And no whit using it: I am not abashed,
 Albeit I speak as one whom shame has
 marred;

That I am not I pray take no offence,
 For should I show a penitent herein
 I must do penance for much care of you,
 And this I will not. Be not offended with
 me;

For God doth know, sweet son, that in my
 life

I have used many days in loving you.
 Consider of it: I do not boast myself,
 Seeing I but fall within the range and
 scope

The limit and fair marge of a good law;
 Yet if I have not been there excessive (as
 I say not that I have one whit exceeded),
 Surely I have not shortened its just room
 Or narrowed in the sweet law's offices.
 That I am so put off I say is well;
 You are wise herein; for women at best
 count

Are the mere spoil of a male reason, lie
 In his loosest thoughts outside. We are
 the chaff,

The gross unwinnowed husks of your
 fanned wheat;

I say that you do well to turn me off.
 But this too for my witness I should say;
 That if you do me there a word of wrong,
 Yea the thin grain of one particular word,
 The same is worse than ill. I pardon it.
 That I did love you, God shall do me right
 To bring the credit will approve it me:

That I have sought your health yourself
 believe;

That I did love the state and would get
 ease

For its wried body, shall make smooth my
 name

In patient reputation of good men.
 The end of that is come. Sir, this much
 yet;

Since you have thus delivered up your
 place,

Your worth and body to the love of these
 That hate me deadly—wherein you do
 well,

For yet I will not say but you do well—
I will entreat such almsgiving of you
As for my son of Anjou and myself
May serve to make us a safe place away,
Where we may keep behind the perilous
time

And house with simple peace. For I do
know

That howsoe'er these fare as friends with
you,

With us they will but fare as murderers do
That live between the sharpening of a
knife

And the knife's edge imbrued. This being
made sure,

I take my leave of a most royal care
That has been precious pain to me, and is
No costlier than a pin. The end is here
That I have gladly answered.

CH.— You say well;
I would not have you think so thinly of
me

As that girl's mercy and the feeble flesh
Prevail upon advice. I love you much.
But me she heeds not: tell her you, my
lord,

I love no meddled policy of man's
Before her honor.

CA.— I am perfect in your way.
Best let me part more quickly.

CH.— You shall not go.
GUI.—Madam, your son is tempered
graciously;

You see his will keeps good.

CH.— Ay, so it doth;
I thank you, sir; you see my will is good.

CA.—I had rather be a thing of laboring
days
Than a so childed mother.

GUI.— You must give her way.
CA.—It is not fit that I should wear your
time.

CH.—That year of mine is lame wherein
you lack.

CA.—Nay, there's no speech of silk will
serve your turn,

You must be whole with me or break; I'll
have

No patched alliance, lank allegiances,
Starved out of use.

CH.— I do not like the business.
CA.—Nay, but speak large; what is it
you mislike?

CH.—Keep you that way.

CA.— Why this is what I said.

CH.—I have thought of it, and have in-
formed my heart

How pale distempering evil makes the
blood

That ran full way before. I will not do it;
Lest all that regiment of muffled years
Now huddled in the rear and skirts of time
I must walk through, take whips into their
hands

To bruise my shame withal.

CA.— I heed you not.
It is the sick and infirm spite of fear
Makes your will insolent. But as it please
you;

It is not I that shall wear death for it.

GUI.—You do both stray: give me some
leave to speak,

And keep your patience whole. Right
noble sir,

For my poor worth and special reverence
here

I would not waste the price of half an hour;
Though I might say, and no man cross the
lie,

That in the personal state of mine esteem
I have kept endurance on against a wrong
That might put blood i' the dead. My
royal father,

Whose cost did earn the sum of such a
name,

Yea; even to full repute; whose motive
hand

Did the most inward ties of war unloose,
And pluck its joint away; this man so built,
So strained and clean of any weak revolt
That faith herself did set her tongue by his

And use his lesson for her proper text;
This bulk and nerve of all your services
Fashioned in one man's work; how he came
dead

You twain are no whit less assured than I,
Who have thrown beyond conjecture. It
is poor truth

To say we think that he fared treacherously;
If knowledge be no weaker than report,
And proof no looser than a popular mouth,
Then we do know it. O, such a want we
have,

So dear and so entire a loss in him,
As should make France the book of all
men's griefs,

The mould wherein a very face of sorrow
Were cast indeed. That I have not avenged
him,

Both you dare swear: that is not my shame,

But my sore pain and burden of this time,
Both you do likewise see. How say you,
sir!

Will you find sufferance smoother-faced
than mine?

Have I borne much? or is there fault in
me,

Who am the limit of endurances?

Now in this very point of patience here,
Even here, you take me; and considering
this,

Commend the calm and heaviness in me
That lackeys your own purpose, runs before
Your proper care, pages your policy.

Now, sir,

Were I a poor man's dog the same were
well;

Were I a sick man's fool the same were
well;

Being thus, I doubt it is not well at all.
A father slain is more than so much bones
That worms and flies dishallow, being thin
dust

And out of value; and personally to me
It is much more. I will not have this way;
Lest my most loving honor born to you
Leave me ashamed, or service done disbar
All graces from me. You were strongly
sworn,

Yea, with the assurance that all faith
makes up,

To help us mend the ravelled rents of time;
But though you had more iron in your hand
Than you have yet, you cannot grasp therein
Two faiths, two sides, two justices at once.
Choose you, and put good will to choice;
for me,

I am not thrall'd in your election.

CH.—Madam, his talk flies far.

CA.—True, he speaks right.

CH.—Should I not answer with a lip more
tame,

This friendship might turn slack.

GUI.—I keep still loyal.

CH.—Yea, sir, we doubt you nothing,
nothing at all:

You are our lawful friend; you speak all
well;

You have had wrong, men use you griev-
ously;

And I do love you for your bearing it.

CA.—The man that slew Duke Francis
has his breath.

CH.—Ah, and his blood, some scantlings
too of that:

We saw what tittle of it was spilled in him.
Still it is quaint that such a shaken scalp,
So gray as that, should cover so much red;
'T is very strange and quaint; ha, think
you not?

CA.—(To *Guise*.) All's clear again; he
smells about the blood

That shall incense his madness to high
strain;

Look, now he peers and fingers on his
sleeve.

GUI.—Pish! it looks ugly.

CA.—I must push him yet,
Make his sense warm. You see, blood is
but blood;

Shed from the most renowned veins o' the
the world,

It is no redder; and the death that strikes
A blind broad way among the foolish heaps
That make a people up, takes no more
pains

To finish the large work of highest men;
Take heart and patience to you; do but
think

This thing shall be no heavier then, being
done,

Than is our forward thought of it.

CH.—Ay true,

But if men prate of blood—I'll none on me.
And yet I care not much. You are wise,
mother;

You know me through, ay, and know God
as well,

Whom I know not. This is a grave thing.

CA.—Yea,

And graver should be if I gave you way.

What are you made God's friend for but to
have

His hand over your head to keep it well

And warm the rainy weather through,
when snow

Spoils half the world's work? shall I let
you go

And slip your boy's neck from God's hold
on it

To graze and get more pasture like a
beast?

Nay, child, there's nothing better for a
man

Than to trust God; why, must I tell you
that?

Is there more beard than blood in cheeks
like this

Will some one smite them? Now, I think,
I think

And praise God for it, the next Huguenot
Who plucks you by the ear or smites on
the face

Shall do no much work after,

CH.— True, madam,
I need be king now; you speak true in
that.

CA.—I'll call you king then always,
king and son,

Dear son and lord of mine. Hold fast on
this

And you are man indeed, and man enough
To teach command to the world and make
its back

Stoop for allegiance. See you, my fair
son,

This sweet face of authority is a mask
For slaves to rivet or undo the joint,
Except one wear it in the eyes of them
A witness to outbear shame and revolt
And maim resistance in the hands; you
were

Never yet king never had will to wear
That circle that completes the head with
gold

And shuts up strength inside the hold of it;
You are now made man.

CH.— And you made mother twice,
Not by gross generation of the womb,
But issue of more princely consequence;
Set this day gold upon your writ of life,
The last of child-bearing for you; so God
Give you good time of it!

CA.— Ay, grace to thank
That grace that gives not mere deliver-
ance

From unrespective burdens of the flesh,
But the keen spirit refines and recreates
To gracious labor. That God that made
high things,

He wrought by purpose and secure design
The length of his contrivance; he set not
tigers

In the mean seat of apes, nor the wild
swine

I' the stabled post of horses; birds and
dogs

Find portion of him, and he sets the fish
In washing waters; rain and the sweet sun
He shuts and opens with his hand; and us
Hath he set upright and made larger eyes
To read some broken letters of this book
Which has the world at lesson; and for
what,

If we not do the royalest good work,

If we not wear the worth of sovereignty
As attribute and raiment? At our feet
Lies reason like a hound, and faith is
chained;

Lame expectation halts behind our ways,
The soundless secret of dead things is
made

As naked shallows to us. It is for that
We owe strong service of the complete soul
To the most cunning fashioner that made
So good work of us; and except we serve,
We are mere beasts and lesser than a snake,
Not worth his pain at all; so might we
shift

The soul as doth that worm his colored
back,

And turn to herd with footless things that
are

The spoil of dust and rain. To close up
all,

Death takes the flesh in his abhorred hands
Of clean alike and unclean; but to die
Is sometimes gracious, as to slip the chain
From wrist and ankle; only this is sad,
To be given up to change and the mere
shame

Of its abominable and obscure work
With no good done, no clean thing in the
soul

To sweeten against resurrection-time
This mire that made a body, lest we keep
No royalties at all, or in the flesh
The worm's toothed ravin touch the soul
indeed.

CH.—Madam, I hold your sentence good
to hear;

I'll do as you would have me. Pray you
now,

Make no more record of my foolishness.
I have used idle words. Make count of me
As of your servant; for from this day forth
I'll hold no Huguenot's throat one whit
more worth

Than is the cord upon it. Sir, good day.

[Exit King.]

CA.—I told you this before; sit down
and laugh

I told you this should be.

GUL.— We have worked well.

CA.—Is this no better now than violent
ways

To threaten the poor passage of his life
With the mean loss of some sick days and
hours?

You would not let him fill his season up
And feed on all his portions cut i' the
world;

You have iron in your policies, and hate
The unbound brows of composition;
But I whose cheek is patient of all wrongs,
Who have endurance to my garment, worn
In face o' the smiters, I know through by
heart

Each turn i' the crannies of the boy's spoilt
mind

And corner used in it. Years gone, my
lord,

Before the tender husk of time grew hard,
He would make pastime to tear birds to
death

And pinch out life by nips in some sick
beast;

And being a man, blood turns him white to
see.

Believe me that, I'll praise you more for
faith

Than I praise God for making him a fool.
What shall get done though hell stand up
up to hear

And in God's heaven God's self become
ashamed,

The rule of use rebel against its way,
The sense of things upon itself revolt,
To the undoing of man,—this shall not fail
For the meek sake of his most female
mouth

That would keep honey in.

GUI.— Have your way so:
I do not cross you; keep that fashion.

CA.— Yea,
I think to have it certainly, fair sir;
Keen man he were that should cheat me
of it.

GUI.—This screw of yours has wrenched
him round our way;

Yet these may pinch the wax, new-mould
his face,

Carve him a mouth, make here an eye or
there;

Will you wring loose their fingers till he
drop

Like a fruit caught, so in one's hollowed
hand?

You'll have some necks to break across ere
that.

Why, Châtillon's gray chin keeps wagging
down

Close at his ear; that demi-dog Soubise
Is made his formal mirth; fool Pardaillan

Struts with his throat up like a cock's, and
brags

The king is kind,—has secrets,—he might
say

Some grace was done him,—would not
miss his luck,—

As for the merit—

CA.— So far it goes by rote;
Were there no larger peril than hangs there,
I'd strangle it with but a hair of mine.

GUI.—Madam, I would be fain to under-
stand.

CA.—Sir, this it is; the woman I set on
To shape and stoop him perfectly my way,
Is very falsely made my thorn, and wears
Such fashions as a new-enfranchised slave
To beat his master for delivering him.

She is turned milk, would slit her web
mis-made

Now it shows blood at edge.

GUI.— What ailed your judgment then
To light on her? had you some plague i'
the eye

To choose so sickly?

CA.— The king did lean to her,
And out of his good will I made this cord
To lead him by the ear. Do not you doubt
me;

She has not slit the web so near across
But her own edge may turn upon her skin:
I have a plot to rid the time of her
For some slight days.

GUI.— Some trick to bite her life?

CA.—Nay, I'll not lose her; no more
weight shall be

Than a new time may lift from her again.
I shall but get a clog upon my court
Slyly removed; a double good shall bud
Upon a most small evil. Go with me
And bring me to my women. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *The Admiral's House.*

Enter COLIGNY and Attendant.

CO.—Carry these letters to my son, and
bid him

Attend me with La Noue. If you shall see
That noble man who spoke with me to-day,
Pray him be with me too. This is a care
That I would have you diligent in; so shall
you

Gather fresh good of me.

ATT.— I will, my lord.

CO.—I shall be bound to you: the time
that makes

Such ruin of us doth yet bequeath me
this,
That where I find good service without
break,
I hold it dearer than a prosperous man.
See you be speedy.

ATT.—I am already hence. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *The Louvre.*

*Enter LA ROCHEFOUCAULD and VOLANDE
DE MONTLITARD.*

LA R.—You do not use me smoothly.

YOL.— Did I sue
That you would love me? I owe you
nothing.

LA R.— No?
But if I leave with you so much of me,
Do I not keep some petty part of you?

YOL.—O, not a whit; what would you
do with it?

LA R.—In faith, I know not.

YOL.— You have the holy way
Of cutting clean an oath; as you do coin it
A girl might use the like; your protestation
Is made out of the ravel of spoilt silk;
I trust no such tagged speech.

LA R.— To do you pleasure
I would unswear the seated saints from
heaven
And put shame out of use with violent
breath.

But to my point.

YOL.— Shall I not say one thing?

LA R.—So I would have you.

YOL.— Then, I think, this breath
So spent on my vexation is not used
For love of me—nay, pray you keep
that in—

But the keen service of your admiral
To whom I must be evidenced.

LA R.— What then?
Are you too far in hate to do me good?

YOL.—Too far in faith to swell you with
such help;

Put down i' the writing that a woman's
trust

Is much belied with you; there's no such
flaw

As male repute doth work to blot us with:
I swear I will not show you anything.

LA R.—I do not beg such alms of you;
come back:

Do words make all the sweet on so sweet
lips?

YOL.—I did not bid you shift your note
to this.
Sir, that ring's edge of yours has cut my
glove. [*Exeunt.*]

—:—

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Environs of the Louvre.*

Enter DENISE.

Denise.

BID me keep silence? though I lose all,
I'll wear

Silence no further on my wrong-doings
That holds no weather out. I'll speak
then; God,

Keep me in heart to speak! because my
sense,

Even to the holiest inward of its work
This unclean life has marred; I am stained
with it

Like a stained cloth, it catches on my
face,

Spoils my talk midways, breaks my breath
between,

Paints me ill colors; plucks me upon the
sleeve

As who would say, "Forget me, will you,
then?"

Bid me keep silence? yea, but in losing
that

Lies are so grown like dirt upon my lip
No kisses will wipe dry nor tears wash
bare

The mouth so covered and made foul.
Dear God,

I meant not so much wrong-doing that
prayer

Should choke or stab me in the throat to
say;

For see, the very place I pray withal
I use for lying and put in light words

To soil it over: the thoughts I make prayer
with

Fasten on ill things and set work on
them,

Letting love go. If one could see the
king

And escape writing—

Enter CINO.

CINO.—Yea, cousin, at prayer so late?
Teach me the trick, I would be fain to
prayer,

I grow so sick now with the smell of time.
Ah, the king hurts you? touch a spring i'
the work

And it cries—eh? and a joint creaks in it?

DEN.—This fool wears out.

CINO.—At wrists?

DEN.—At head; but fool,

Hast thou not heard of the king?

CINO.—Yea, news, brave news;

But I'll not spoil them on you.

DEN.—My good Cino—

Nay, sweet thing, fair sir, any precious word,

Tell me.

CINO.—The king—what will you give me then?

Half a gold fringe worn off your cloak for alms?

DEN.—Nay, anything it wills, my Cino. Quick.

CINO.—A ring? yea, more; what's better than a ring?

A kiss I doubt of yours; but I'll have best, Nothing of good or better.

DEN.—Come, sir; well?

CINO.—Tell me what's better than a kiss; but hear you;

Pull not away, paint me no red: the king—

DEN.—What is the king?

CINO.—Twice half his years, I think;

God keep him safe between the grays and blacks.

DEN.—My head is full of tears and fever; hence,

Get from me, fool, thou ragged skirt of man, Thou compromise twixt nothing and a bat!

Blind half a beast! I'd see thee hanged and laugh.

What fool am I to scold at thy brain's shell?

What sort of underthing shall I call thee, Who am thy railer?

CINO.—What would you have me? ha?

Must I poison my poor bread or choke myself

To make French Chicot room? Being simply fool,

I eat fool's alms: I may talk wise men down,

Who gives me sober bread to live by? see; You'll let me prate now?

DEN.—Yea, prate anything;

Find me the queen, and I'll with you.
Cino—

CINO. Well?

DEN.—Use me better as we go, poor fool. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter King, TAVANNES, PARDAILLAN, SOUBISE, BRANTÔME, and others.

CH.—Brown hair or gold, my lord Soubise, you say?

SOU.—Pure black wears best.

PAR.—He will not say so, sir.

CH.—Ay, will not? are you wise, my Pardaillan?

BRA.—Yolande—you know this damozel I mean,

One that has black hair hard on blue—

SOU.—Hear that!

Blue hair, eyes black!

BRA.—But note me what she says: Soubise is a fair name, and that fair lord That wears it sewn across his arm is good To give her tame bird seeds to eat.

SOU.—Her bird!

BRA.—She has a sister of your height, this girl,

Skilled to work patterns with gold thread and paint.

SOU.—Well, what of her then?

CH.—Yea, sir, hold by that.

BRA.—She said this to me, choosing seeds of corn

To put between her peacock's bill, it chanced,

One summer time; and biting with her teeth

Some husk away to make the grain more soft,

She put her mouth to the bird's mouth: but I—

“Give me food rather, I have need to eat” Whereat her teeth showed fuller and she said

—The seed still in her lip—she laughed and said

Her two tame birds, this peacock and Soubise,

Were all she had to feed.

SOU.—I thank her.

CH.—Well, What followed? that you kissed away the seed?

BRA.—Hush now, she comes, fair lord.

Enter Queen-Mother, DENISE, YOLANDE, and other Ladies, with CINO.

CA.—Take heart, Denise;

I chide him home.—Fair son, I hear hard
reus;

My lord of Guise in his ill hours of
blood

Will hardly trust your courtesy to use
His lady's glove; here was one wept right
out

At hearing of it.

CII.— He does belie my patience;
It was this lord that had her glove away.

CA.—The Guise is sick of it, touched
hard and home;

It bites him like a hurt; you are his keen
plague,

Sharp sauce to hunger, medicine to his
meat,

A sufferance no pained flesh could hold
upon

And not turn bitter.

CH.— Well, God heal his head!

CA.—I did not see my lord Soubise—
make room,

So thick a yellow crowd of ladies' heads
Makes the air taste of powdered scent and
spice

One cannot see a friend; my lord Soubise,
We love you well, what holds you back,
my lord?

SOU.—Madam—

CA.—They trouble us with tales of you;
Here's a maid carries face of Montlitard
Whose heart seems altered to a fresher
name

The blood paints broader on her cheek,
sweet fool;

Answer me this, nay, I shall make you
clear;

Denise has told me how her middle sleep
Was torn and broken by lamentings up,
By sudden speeches, shreds and rags of
talk,

And running over of light tears between;
And ever the poor tender word "Soubise"
Sighed and turned over—ah, such pain she
had!

Poor love of mine, why need you spoil me
her?

SOU.—She will not say so.

YOL.— But she will not say
She loves not, though it sting her soul to
speak,

Being still, woe's me, so sharp and sore a
truth

And hard to hide.

CH.—Well said of her; strike hands.

CINO.—Take comfort, daughter; he shall
be made fast to thee

And the Devil climbs not in by way of
marriage.

Conclude temptation, and God increase
your joy

In the second generation of good fools.

Gripe fingers each; I will be bridesman; so.

SOU.—Fool—I am hurt with wonder,
madam—fool—

CINO.—Nay, sir, keep hands.

CII.— This is most gross in you.

CINO.—Yea, so; this is the time of horn-
blowing.

Did your grace never eat stolen eggs? the
meat of them

Is something like the mouth of a fair woman.
Beseech you now let your priest drink no
wine

And you shall have him better for yourself;
Sir, look to that; I would not have you
marred.

CH.—No, you shall stay.

SOU.— I pray you, bid him peace.

CII.—Let the fool talk.

CINO.—There's freedom for your kind
now.

I have not seen a groom so blench and
start;

I wonder what shoe pinched his mother?

SOU.—Beast! [*Strikes him, and exit.*]

CA.—You are sad, sir.

CH.—I am not well at heart.

CA.—It is the summer heat; I have not
seen

So hard a sun upon the grape-season

These twelve years back.—Fellow, look
up, take heart;

He cannot hurt thee.

CINO— Why not? I am no woman.

I am sure he has made my head swell; get
him married.

I'll do as much for him. Eh? will I not?
(*To Yolande.*)

YOL.—I will not wed him; so the shame
shall stick

Where it began, on him alone.

CA.—(*Aside.*—

Whispers?

(*Observing Denise and the King.*)

I do suspect you sorely. Oh! so close;

Thrusting your lip even against his ear?

Yea, hold the sleeve now, pinch it up;
(*aloud*) there may be

No ill in this; and I have hope it wears

No face of purpose, but I like it not.

YOL.—What is it you mislike?

CA.— Eh? nothing, I;
My care's not half the worth of a fool's
head

Nor carries so much weight. My lord Bour-
deilles,

Have you no tale for us?

BRA.— Yea, madam, a rare jest.

YOL.—We'll pluck it forth.

RENÉE.— Ay, pinch it out of him;

We would be merry.

PAR.— Umph! I know the tale.

BRA.—I would not have a gosseller hear
you, sir.

CINO.—I see a tale now hang at the
king's sleeve.

CA.—A very light one.

BRA.—But if you hear me, madam,—

There's matter for a leap-year's laugh
therein.

The noble damsel of Maulévrier—

CA.—Is she your tale?

BRA.— Speak low; she told it me.

YOL.—Where should he hear it?

CA.—Peace now: sir, make on.

BRA.—She being about my lady of Na-
varre

Last night,—I mean some foolish nights
ago,

For there last night she was not, I believe,
Made out this jest: this is the jest she made.

CINO.—'Tis a sweet jest, but something
over ripe.

BRA.—You have not heard it.

CINO.—I hear it with my nose, and it
smells rank.

BRA.—You all do know his highness of
Navarre

Is loving to his lady; and, God's death,
She is worth no less a price; nor doth
affection,

Being set on her, outweigh the measured
reason

Nor sense of limit she doth well deserve;
Yea, she outgoes the elected best, outswells
What is called good.

CINO.— A very merry tale.

BRA.—Prithee, fool, peace.—Now at that
time I speak of

He was at point to come; but being delayed
(The how I say not—this I do not say;

Indeed I would not—mark you not the how)
He could not come. She, grown hereon
to heat,

Chid at her ladies, wrangled with her hair,
Drew it all wried, then wept, then laughed
again;

Till one saying, "Madam, I did see my
lord

About the middle matter of the dusk

Slip forth to speak with"—here she stayed;
the queen

Doth passionately catch her by that word,
Crying with whom? and might this be a
man?

And should men use her so? and shame of
men,

And not the grace of temperance in them
Which is the cover and the weeds of sin;
And such wet circumstance of waterish
words

As ladies use; whereto the damsel—
"Madam,

I may swear truly no man had him forth,
But to swear otherwise—"

CA.— I do perceive you;
There was a conference of the gossellers,
And there was he.

BRA.—But he that brought him forth—

CA.—Enough, the jest runs out; I know
your matter.

Fair son, you would be private?

CH.— Like enough:
I do not say you trouble me to stay,
But you shall please me going.

CA.— Good time to you!
Come with me, sirs. Take you the fool
along.

[*Exeunt all but King and DENISE.*]

CH.—I am assured you love me not a
whit.

DEN.—You will not set your faith upon
that thought;

I love you dearly.

CH.— I do not bid you swear it.

DEN.—I pray you, if you know what I
would say,

That you endure this feebleness which sits
Upon my lips i' the saying.

CH.— What do you think of me?

DEN.—I know you are my master and a
king

That I have called thrice nobler than his
name;

I know my lip hath got the print of you,
And that the girdle of your fastened arms
Keeps warm upon me yet; and I have
thought,

Yea, I have sworn it past the reach of
faith,
Even till the temperate heaven did, stung
at me,
Begin a chiding,—that you loved me back
To the large aim and perfect scope o' the
heart;
That I was as a thing within your blood,
There moved, and made such passage up
and down
As doth the breath and motion of your air;
Being rather as a pain caught unawares,
A doubtful fever or sick heat of yours
That now the purging time hath rid you of
And made smooth ease.

CH.— You did know better then.

DEN.—Nay, then I think I knew not
anything;
My wits were broken in the use of love.
What do you think of me? I would know
that.

CH.—As of a thing I love—I know not
what;

Only that any slight small thing of yours,
A foolish word, a knot upon your head,
Some plait worn wrong or garment braced
awry,

Any girl's thing—doth grow so and possess
With such a strength of thought, so waxen
full,

The complete sum and secret of my
will

I cannot get it out.

DEN.— If that be love,
Then I love you, which you did swear a
lie.

For I do feed upon you in my meat
And sleep upon you in my tired bed
And wake upon you in my praying times,
As you were used and natural unto me,
My soul's strong habit and nativity.

CH.—I think you do; I never taxed you
else.

But he that will not swear I love you
back

Doth sin outside the heavy name of lie
And compass of a villain.

DEN.— I doubt you not.
You know that I did urge you for the
queen?

CH.—Yea: you made up a peace between
our jars.

DEN.—Ay, like a damned peacemaker,
a truce
More sharp than is the naked side of war.

CH.—What now? you slip on that fool's
text again?

DEN.—That I did pluck you over to her
side

I would repent even in the cost and price
Of my most inward blood, yea of my
heart.

CH.—You did a good work then: now
you turn sharp.

DEN.—I do well think that had I never
been

You had not fallen in her purposes.

CH.—I may perceive my patience is
your fool:

You make slight use of me. Take note of
this,

Henceforth I will not undergo the words
That it shall please you cast upon my
place

In such loose way. What makes you chide
at me?

I have you no sort of fool but me to wear
The impatient work of your mistaken
blood

With a soft spirit?

DEN.— You have sworn me love;
If you did love me with more worth and
weight

Than slackly binds a two hours' liking up,
You would not pluck displeasure from my
words

I am too weak to make fit wrath for you.

CH.— Ay, that I think.

DEN.—You do me right; but mark,
Being this I am, not big enough to hurt,
I do repent me past all penitence,
Outweep the bounded sorrow of all words,
That I did bring you to such peace again
As hath its feet in blood.

CH.— You did then swear
Nothing one half so blessed and so clean
As to make peace between her lips and
mine;

You bade me think how good it was to
have

The grace of such a gentle fellowship
To lean my love upon; how past the law
And natural sweetness of sweet mother-
hood

Her passion did delight itself on me;
With all the cost of rare observances
Followed the foot of my least enterprise;
Esteemed me even to the disvaluing
Of her own worthy life; would not, in brief,
Partake the pain of common offices

And due regard that custom hath of time
But for my love. Was this no talk of
yours?

DEN.—Indeed I said so.

CH.— Did I not give you faith?

DEN.—You did believe me; I would
you had not so,
Or that some poisonous pain had killed my
lips
Before they learnt the temper of such
words.

CH.—What then, you knew not this red
work indeed?

No savor of this killing flecked your
speech?

DEN.—I know of it? but to have lied
and known

I had been plagued past all the gins of
hell.

I know of it? but if I knew of it
There is no whip that God could hunt me
with

That would not seem less heavy than thin
snow

Weighed with the scars and shames of my
desert.

CH.—But how if such a thing be neces-
sary?

DEN.—There's no such need that bids
men damn themselves.

CH.—Nay, but if God take hell to work
withal

That is more bitter than all waste of men,
And yet God makes the honey of his law
Out of its sharp and fire-mouthed bitterness,
Why may not I take this? yea, why not I?

DEN.—If you shall think on murder,
how it is,

How mere a poison in all mouths of men
That only at the casual use of it
Sicken and lose the rule of their discourse,
Being wounded with it; how poorest men
alive

That in dull drink have chanced upon a life
Are slain for it, and the red word of sin
Doth elbow them at side and dig their
grave

And makes all tongues bitter on them, all
eyes

Fills out with chiding—how very knaves
do loathe

The tax and blot of such a damned breath
As goes to call hard murder by his name;

Yea; how blood slain shall not be healed
again,

Never get place within the ruined veins,
Never make heat in the forsaken flesh;
O, you shall think thereon.

CH.— Have I not thought?

DEN.—Not this I bid you, this you have
not thought;

How to each foot and atom of that flesh
That makes the body of the worst man
up

There went the very pain and the same
love

That out of love and pain compounded you,
A piece of such man's earth; that all of
these

Feel, breathe, and taste, move and salute
and sleep,

No less than you, and in each little use
Divide the customs that yourself endure;
And are so costly that the worst of these
Was worth God's time to finish; O, thus
you shall not,

Even for the worth of your own well-doing,
Set iron murder to feed full on them.

CH.—Fret me no more; I shall turn
sharp with you.

DEN.—O, sir, in such dear matter as I
have

I fear not you at all. You shall not go.

CH.—I may forget your body's tender
make

And hurt you. Do not put me from myself;
I am dangerous then; being sobered, I do
know

How rash and sharp a blood I have, and
weep

For my fierce use of it: push not so far.

DEN.—Yea now, put all the bruise of
them on me

And I will thank you. You did hurt me
once,

Look here, my wrist shows where you
plucked it hard;

I never spoke you ill for it; you shall
Do me worse hurt and I not cry at all.

CH.—This is fool's talk.

DEN.— And once in kissing me
You bit me here above the shoulder, yet
The mark looks red from it; you were too
rough,

I swore to punish you and starve your lip
To a more smooth respect. I have loved
you, sir;

Sir, this is harsh that you regard me not.

CH.—Nay, peace! I will not have you
loud.

DEN.— My lord—
CH.—Say "Charles" now; be more
tender of your mouth.

DEN.—Sir, the shame that burns through
my cheek and throat
Cannot get words as hot as blood to speak,
Or you would hear such; keep your eyes
on me,
Ay, look so; have you sense or heart, my
lord?

Are you not sorry if one come to wrong?
CH.—This is some trap. What makes
you turn so quick?

DEN.—Yea, king, are you? yea, is this
not the king?

And I so pray, speak words so hard to
speak,

Kneel down, weep hard,—but you shall
hear this out,—

To be put like a garment off? not so.
The queen-mother throws nets about, spins
well,

Contrives some thread to strike the whole
web through,

To catch you like a plague,—there's worse
and worse,—

What hurt is it, what pain to men outside,
Although she ruin us, make spoil of us,
Melt the gold crown into a ring of hers,
What harm?

CH.—What harm by God! I think
much harm.

DEN.—But this is worse—to catch France
in her trap,

People and all, body and soul; cheat God,
Ruin us all, as ruined we shall be,

I know not how too well, but something
thus,

And now God puts this hour of time to be
A steel sword in your hand, and says withal
"Now give me token if there be a king
Inside you, do me right who made you way,
Drew you so high"; I pray you for God's
love

Let none put thievish fingers on the time,
Loosen your sword God girt so next your
side.

What, men steal money and you hang for
that,

What, one puts just his little knife in you
As I put just a bodkin in this hair,
And he gets choked with cord and spat
upon—

But when some treason stabs belief in the
back,

Thrusts its tongue out and wags its head at
God,

Turns bitter his sweet mouth with vinegar,
Bruises him worse than any Pilate's Jews.

These men go free? It were too hard to
think.

Yea, sir, I will not have you lift your lip,
Yea, you may smite me with your foot, fair
lord,

Whom yesterday you kissed here in the
mouth;

I lay no care on life or on this breath
Or on this love that hath so dead an end;
More ill is done than good will ever be,
And I now pluck the finished fruit of it
Planted by bitter touches of the lip,
False breath, hot vows, the broken speech
of lust

By finger-pinches and keen mouths that
bite

Their hard kiss through: nay, but I pray
you well

Let there be no more ill than grows hereon,
No such kiss now that stings and makes a
stain,

No cups drunk out that leave dead lees of
blood.

Be sorry for me; yea, be good, my king,
Tender with me: let not the queen-mother
Touch me to hurt: sir, know you certainly
None loves you better: also men would say
It may be some joy you have had of me;
Even for that sake, for that most evil sake,
Have some good mercy.

CH.— Mad, but really mad!
Here, child, put up your hands in mine,
Denise:

By God's blood, the girl-shakes and shakes
and burns—

What, have you fever?

DEN.— None, no pain; but, sir,
Be pitiful a little; my sweet lord,
Have you not had me wholly in one hand
To do your will with? would I lie to you?

CH.—Eh, would you lie? well, God
knows best, I doubt.

DEN.—I pray God bring me quick to
bitter hell

If I lie to you: have you eyes at least?

That woman with thin reddish-blood-like
lips,

That queen-mother that would use blood
for paint,

Can you not see her joint the trap for you,
Not see the knife between her fingers, sir,

Where the glove opens?

CH.— This is right your way;
A sweet way, this; what will you bid me do?

DEN.—Not this, not this she pulls you on to do;
Not set a treason where a promise was,
Not fill the innocent time with murder up,
Not—

CH.—Tush! some preacher's plague has caught the child.
Are you mad truly? some strange drink in you?

DEN.— Sir—
CH.—Do you take me for no king at all,

That you talk this? I never heard such talk,
No hands on me; nay, go, and have good day, [Exit DENISE.

Re-enter the Queen-Mother and YOLANDE.

Do you note this, our mother?
CA.— Yea, and well.
CH.—This is the very mercy of a maid;
To cut a hand off lest a finger ache
And paint the face of resolution white
Lest the red startle one.

CA.— It is most true;
I pray you be not movable of wit
Or waxen to her handling.

CH.— I will not;
There's nothing shall have time to startle me,
Being in this work so deep; no delicate sense.

That gathers honey at her lip shall fool
The resolution and large gravity
That holds my purpose up. I am no fool;

I will go through with it; I am no boy
To be kissed out of mind; I will not fail. [Exit.

CA.—Yolande, this way; come nearer, my fair child;
I love you well; there's no such mouth at court

For music and fair color; sit by me;
How pleasant is it to find eyes to love
That will not cheat or flatter one! Dear maid,

I think you find a time between two loves
To put some poor dwarfed liking by for me?

Indeed you may; see if I love you not?

Get me to proof.

YOL.—You are my gracious mistress;
I would be always glad of service done
And found worth taking.

CA.— Do you love Denise?
Meseems the girl grows whiter and less straight,
Dull, too, I think; eh, you think otherwise?

YOL.—She seems to me grown duller than spoil wine.

CA.—I am right glad you do not think her wise.

I have a plan to pleasure mine own self,
And do you good. Are you content thereto?

YOL.— Madam, content.

CA.— You will not blench away?
Not lightly start from me?

YOL.—I will not so.

CA.—I trust you perfectly.—Fetch hither to me

That box of mine wherein I keep rare scents;

You know, the one carved of sweet foreign wood

I use to dress my hair and face withal.

YOL.—Madam, I shall. [Exit.

CA.— Ay, it shall do you good.
Will this one hold in wearing? I think, yes;

For I have seen her tread upon sick flies
Where the other swerved, and would not do them hurt.

This Yolande is half cold, and wears her pleasure

No deeper than the skin; thereto she is hard,

Cunning and bold; I have heard tales of her;

She hath the brain and patience of hoar beards

In her most supple body. I do not think
That she would wry her mouth on tasting blood.

Re-enter YOLANDE.

So, did you miss it?

YOL.— Madam, it is here.

CA.—Thanks: have good care of the lid,
you see it has

Fair foreign work of cunning little heads
And side-mouthed puppets quaintly cut on it;

See how I pinch it open with a trick;

I would not have all fingers mix in it.
 For there are spices which are venomous;
 So are best things puddled with ill in them,
 We cannot sift them through; ; nothing so
 clean
 But you may tread it foul, nor so foul any-
 thing
 That one may never warp its use to good;
 As this which puts out men, and is most
 rare
 To sweeten gloves with.

YOL.— What am I to do ?

CA.—I know not. Set a cushion to my
 feet;

So.—One has told me each of you to-day
 Lay some girl's gift upon that fool of mine;
 Is this not true ?

YOL.— Madam, it was our game.

CA.—When you shall see him give him
 this for me;

(*Gives her a glove.*)

And yet not me, he loves not me, poor
 fool;

Say that Denise had wrought him such a
 glove,

And being incensed at his late insolence
 Which he hath put upon the king and her
 Was purposed to withhold it; I will con-
 firm you.

Suppose a shift of mine to vex the fool;
 Say what you will, but thrust her name
 therein;

Look that you take him where she may not
 see.

Clasp the silk well across my shoulder;
 thanks;

I am clad too thinly for a queen-mother,
 But all this month is overhot. Be sure
 Nothing shall stick to us. Keep close to
 me. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *The Admiral's House.*

*Enter LANOUE, TELIGNY, and LA ROCH-
 FOUCAULD.*

LA N.—I fear me he can scantily bear
 this out.

TEL.—Nay, fear him not; there goes
 more nerve to him

Than to some lesser scores. His compe-
 tence

Is like that virtue in his mind which fills
 The shallowness of thin occasions up,
 And makes him better than the season is
 That serves his worth to work in. He shall
 not live

And bear himself beyond the fear of time,
 Where other men made firm in goodness
 drop

And are the food of peril.

LA R.—Doubtless he is most wise;
 But I misdoubt he doth too much regard
 Each trick and shift of bastard circum-
 stance;

It is the custom and gray note of age
 To turn consideration wrong way out
 Until it show like fear.

TEL.— I pray, sir, tell me
 In what keen matter hath he so blenched
 aside

Since time began on him? or in what
 fashion

Hath he worn fear? The man is absolute,
 Perfectly tempered; that I a little speak
 him,

Your less observance of him shall excuse
 And so my praise allow itself. He hath
 been

In all hard points of war the best that ever
 Did take success by the hand; the first that
 wore

Peace as the double coronet of time,
 The costly stone set in red gold of war,
 So wise to mix reverse with sufferance,
 Use fortune with a liberal gravity
 And discipline calamitous things with
 grace,

That failure more approved him, being so
 shaped

And worn to purpose in his wisdom's
 worth,

Than men are praised for hazard, though it
 leaves

Their heads embraced with wealth. His
 nobleness of speech

Hath made true grace and temperate re-
 serve

But usual names for his; he is too pure,
 Too perfect in all means of exercise
 That are best men's best pearl, to be
 esteemed

At single value of some separate man
 That the thin season can oppose to him.

LA R.—I say not else.

TEL.— So would I have you say.

LA R.—Had I dispraised the admiral, it
 had shown

My love to him that I did prick your
 speech

To such fair estimate of his fair worth.
 The man is come.

Enter COLIGNY.

CO.— Good morrow, noble friends.
Fair son, it is a loving bound that doth
Limit your custom thus.

TEL.— I am best pleased
When I may use you thus familiarly.

CO.—(*To La R.*) My lord, you told me
of a way you had

To bring the matter clear we spoke upon.

LA R.—Yea, by a woman's means.

CO.— I think it was.

LA R.—I saw her yesternight.

LA N.— You did not say
Where our hopes went? I would not
trust you far.

LA R.—Nay, I did strain discretion out
of wear;

I told her nothing.

CO.— What did you get of her?
I think you called the woman—umph—
Yolande.

LA R.—That's your demand, what I did
get of her?

Why, such fair time as women keep for us;
What better should I get?

TEL.—(*To La N.*) I fear him greatly;
It is the unwound and ravelled sort of man
That the proof uses worst; so large of lip
Was never yet secure in spirit.

CO.— Sir,
We have looked for more of you.

LA R.— This is pure truth;
I had such usage as made room for talk,
And in the vantage of occasion put
Inquiry on her, how the queen her mistress
Was moved in temper towards us; did she
say thus,

Or thus; you see I spoke not as of purpose
To get this out, but just in some loose way;
As did she put new color in her hair,
Or what sweet kind of water did she take
To smooth her neck, what powder blanch
it with;

And twenty such blown matters out of
joint;

Then at the last felt underhand on this,
What were her state-words, her talk's
policy;

Which way she bowed; or should the Pol-
ish king

Weigh dearer than the duke of Alencon
Or either than this Charles; and thus, and
thus:

Being so, you see, bosomed and gathered
up

Towards the close and clearest time of all
She could keep nothing safer than her
mouth

Would let it out for me; and I as quick
To catch her talk for food as 'twere a
kiss

The last I thought to find about her lips.

CO.—But to the point she told you of,
if thus

You got one clear.

TEL.— Ay, that, sir, show us that.

LA R.—Give me the breath to come to
it, my lords;

Thus was it; I must hide her foolishness.
Deep as trust lies in man; whereon I swore
Ten such sweet oaths as love doth take to
wind

His windy weaving up; then she begins
The matter of her fear, thus quakes thereon—

TEL.—This will outlive all patience.

LA N.— Bear with it.

LA R.—The queen she said was kind,
not given to put

Her care of things, outside her talk, but
kind

And would say somewhat—something one
might know—

As this; the queen was graciously disposed
And all sick humor of old policies

By this blown out; she would not do men
wrong;

We should have music in the month would
play

All harsher-throated measures out, and
make

Even in the noisy and sick pulse of war
Continual quiet.

CO.— Did she take such words?

LA R.—Even these I tell you.

CO.— I thank you for their use:

This trouble hath borne fruit to us of yours.

LA R.—To please a lesser friend than
you are, sir,

I'll undergo worse labor, stretch myself
To a much keener service. Sirs, farewell:
I have a business waits upon the king
That narrows half my leisure seasons in.

[*Exit.*]

CO.—What do you say of this?

TEL.— May we believe
The Florentine with so light a key
Lock such deep matter? I do not trust
the man.

CO.— Sir, what say you?

LA N.—I rule not by such levels.

Co.—I hold with both of you; and I am glad
The time hath rid him hence.

TEL.— True, it is fit.

Co.—He weighs much lighter than our counsel may.

By this I doubt not, if his whore spake truth

(As commonly such have repute to trip
At unawares on it, and escape lies

By disesteem of truth)—I say I doubt not
The queen doth something cover in her speech

That has more danger in its likelihood
Than a snake poison.

LA N.— Will you take it so?

Co.—Nay, so I know it. Therefore as we prefer

Before the deadly-colored face of war
The cold assurance of a sober peace,
And esteem life beyond death's violence
For all dear friends who hang their weight on us,

It so imports us to make use of time
As never was more need.

TEL.— What must we do for you?

Co.—I would send letters to the province towns

For witness how impaired a state we have
In this loose Paris; how like beleaguered men

That are at edge of hunger and begin
To slacken their more temperate advice
And heat the blood of counsel, we are bound

To the service of this danger; informing further

Of this my hurt, caught unawares at hand
(As proof doth drive beyond the guess) of one

Who wears the gold of Guise at his point's edge

And hath allowance for the use of him
Rightly received. This being set down, with more

That is but half as hazardous as it
And yet hath face enough, shall sting them through;

So shall their keener service overcome
The providence of these.

LA N.— They shall have news;
Myself am charged to be from hence this week;

The office that I have must be my means
To steal upon our friends that lie abroad

And work them to our way.

TEL.— Have you no more?

Co.—This only, that you warn our Paris men

To keep waked eyes this month; for as I think

(And partly this is gathered of report
Which our late evidence hath put sinew to)
There moves between the Guisards and the queen

Some certain question whose performance will

Bruise us past use. Nay, I am sure of it;
If proof may give security large heart
And things endured be held believable,
Then I am sure. Therefore be wise and swift;

Put iron on your lips, fire in your feet,
And turn trust out of service. I have no more;

For me, this maimed and barren piece I am

May bear the time out, and sufficient roof
Is in the patient cover of a grave
To keep hard weathers off; but for the cause

And for my friends therein I take this care

To counsel you. Farewell.

TEL., LA N.—Farewell, great lord.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III. *The Louvre.*

Enter the Queen-Mother, MARGARET, DENISE, YOLANDE, and other Ladies.

CA.—Call in my fool. You have all made proof of love

Except Denise; nay, she shall gift him too.
I prithee call him to us. (*Exit DENISE.*)

And yet I think
The fellow turns half sour about the lip,
Being almost wholly dull.

MAR.—Nay, I keep friends with him.

CA.—That's like enough, for he doth love your husband.

But the lewd words he put upon my son
And on Denise, did all but quite condemn
Our meek account of them. It is no matter,

If she can pardon him.

Re-enter DENISE with CINO.

O, sir, come hither.

CINO.—I shall run at your bidding,
shall I not?

- CA.— What should you do ?
 MAR.—Ay, there, what would you be ?
 CINO.—Not fool enough to be a dog of yours.
 MAR.—This is no fool; he can do naught but rail.
 YOL.—The fool has strayed among the gossellers.
 CINO.—I begin to see I am virtuous : the wicked abuse me.
 CA.—Come hither, sirrah. Look well upon this fellow ;
 Would you not say a fool so round of flesh Should be as courteous as a spaniel, ha ?
 Make answer, sir ; we are told news of you, What licensed things inhabit in your lip That should be whipt ere heard, corrected first
 And after to offend : what say you to 't ?
 CINO.—Now shall I slip for want of a good tongue
 And have my patience beaten. Prithee lend me
 A tongue of yours.
 CA.—Have I more tongues than one ?
 CINO.— A score or so.
 CA.—Show us a little first
 What sort of speech thy mother taught thee mar.
 MAR.—Ay, there it lies ; try that.
 CINO.—What will you have me say ?
 YOL.—His jests are waste.
 ANNE.—Pure scandal screams in them.
 CINO.—You call me gosseller, ha ?
 YOL.— Nay, that did I.
 CINO.—Shall I turn preacher for your sake and make
 A parable of your mouths ?
 MAR.— That, that ; come on.
 YOL.—Put your worst wrath on us.
 RENÉE.— We'll hear the fool.
 ANNE.—Speak large and open ; spare us not ; speak wide.
 YOL.—Now the mill grinds ; now mark.
 CINO.— But I shall rail indeed.
 Now I have holy leave.
 MAR.— No matter ; prithee now.
 CINO.—It is your preacher's parable and not mine
 Who am your poor fool and a simple thing.
 CA.—Come, sir, dig out your spleen.
 CINO.—Thus then. You are all goats—
 MAR.—Ha ?
 CA.—Hear him through ; we must have lewder stuff.
- CINO.—And that which should make humbled blood in you
 And clothe your broader times with modesty
 Runs all to spoil and plagues your veins with heat.
 YOL.—We must have more.
 ANNE.— This is blunt matter, fool.
 CINO.—Hunger abides in you as in a dog
 That has been scanted of flesh-meat three days ;
 Sin doth make house with you. Are you pleased yet ?
 You have smooth Sodom in your shameful cheeks ;
 Respect, obedience, the shut lips of fear, Worship and grace and observation.
 You have not heard of more than spring-swoln kine
 Have heard of temperance. Are you yet satisfied ?
 CA.—This is dead ware.
 MAR.—Mere chaff that chokes the bin.
 YOL.—The crust of a fool's bones.
 ANNE.— Dull as a preacher's beard.
 CINO.—But are you not ; resolve me ; are not you ?
 You are made up of stolen scraps of man
 That were filched unawares ; you can make no children
 Because you are grown half male with wicked use.
 CA.—I'll have thee whipt ; thou art a hollow fool,
 And hast no core but pith. Why, any beast
 That hath the spring of speech in his tongue's joint
 Or any talking nerve, could breed to this.
 Thou wert to make us mirth.
 CINO.— Well, do I not ? do I not ?
 MAR.—Who angles in thee save for weeds, shall trip
 Over his ears in mire : shut thy lewd mouth.
 CA.—Will you take gifts to be dumb ? we are wearied with you.
 CINO.—Ay, and worse favors at your prayer I will.
 CA.—You look near white with laughing much, Yoland ;
 Nay, there's no need to catch so sharp at red.
 Give me that glove you keep for him.
 YOL.— Here, madam.
 CA.—Here, wear this Cino, and be friends with us.

CINO.—A fair gold thing, a finch's color
i' the back;

Too small for me though; God change one
of us.

CA.—Denise gave me the glove.

DEN.— I, gracious madam?

CA.—You, gracious maiden; it would
span your wrist.

So, fool; beware you do not rend it.

YOL.— Ah!

CA.—What now? did a gnat sting you?

YOL.— A mere fly;

A mere gold fly; I took it for a wasp.

MAR.—What does this mean? Come
hither, fool; sit here.

CA.—I will not have him there.—
Stand farther off.—

The knave's report doth poison miles about;
Come half so close, he'll kill you in your
ear.

CINO.—Have back your glove; here,
madam, have it back;

I will not wear it.

MAR.—What stings him now i' the brain?

CINO.—I am not well.

CA.— This is some sideways jest.

DEN.—(Aside).—God make this busi-
ness better than my thought,

For I do fear it.

MAR.— Do you note his lips?

YOL.—Yea, his eyes too?

ANNE.— He is not well indeed.

Was all his railing prologue to this play
That reads as dull as death?

CINO.— Now I could prophesy
Like who turns heaven to riddles; my
brain beats.

A man were as good ask mercy of dead
bones

As of the best lip here; nay, I shall be
Quite marred amongst you.

CA.— Convey the fool from us;
This does not look like wine.

CINO.—God be with you; be wise now,
for the fool is gone. [Exit.

CA.—I do not like the face of this.—
Where had you

The glove you gave me?

DEN.—I gave you nothing, madam.

CA.—Does that wind hold? I must
have more of you.

MAR.—Madam, you do not think—

CA.— Give me leave, sweet.
We have had too much peril in report
To let this lie so light. Where had you it?

DEN.—Why do you bait me out of season
thus?

You know I never had it.

CA.— Oh! had you not?

Then I have dreamed awry of you.

DEN.— Madam—

Enter Attendant.

ATT.—Where is the queen?

CA.— What puts such haste in you?
Am I not worth a knee?

ATT.— Pardon me, madam;
I have such tidings; your poor fool is dead.

CA.—Bring me to him. So suddenly to
cease

Is to cry out on his death's manner; bring
me

To see his body; I have a little craft
In such a matter's healing. Some of you
Look to that girl; she swoons to have the
deed

So entered in her ears.

MAR.— It is too foul.

CA.—God pardon her! Could she not
see that sharpness

Was but the gall and flaw of his bowed
brain?

It did not hurt her more, being most pro-
claimed,

Than she has pitied him. Bring her with
us. [Exeunt.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *The Louvre.*

*Enter LA NOUE, SOUBISE and PAR-
DAILLAN.*

Pardaillan.

I HAVE not heard such news.

LA N.—Faith, they sound ill;
If women of so choice and costly names
Turn worse than popular murders are, we
have all

Much need to help ourselves.

SOU.— This is their fashion;
Their blood is apt to heats so mutable
As in their softer bodies overgrow
The temper of sweet reason, and confound
All order but their blood.

PAR.— You read them well;
Good reason have you to put reason to 't
And measure them by the just line of it.

- LA N.—But that such sins should plague
the feverish time
I do not wonder far; all things are grown
Into a rankness.
- PAR.— Still I say, a woman
To do such bitter deeds—
- SOU.— That's where it sticks.
- PAR.—Put on such iron means—
- SOU.— Aye, that, sir, that.
- PAR.—So rip the garments of their
temperance
And keep no modest thing about their
face
To hide the sin thereon; pluck off the
shows
That did o'erblanch a little—
- SOU.— Ay, keep there.
- LA N.—But, gentlemen, what upshot
hear you of?
- PAR.—The queen hath sent her under
heavy guard
To bide some subtler edge of evidence
Here in her chamber.
- SOU.— Why not in prison?
- Look you, they'll let her slip; I say they
will.
- PAR.—But hear you, sir; I did not blame
the queen—
- SOU.—It doth outgrow the height and
top of shame
That she should pass untaxed.
- PAR.— She will not pass.
- SOU.—Take note, sir, there is com-
position in 't;
They would not put imprisonment on her;
Why this is rank: I tell you this is rank.
- PAR.—God's pity! what a perfect wasp
are you!
- Why, say she scapes—as by my faith I see
No such keen reason why she should not
scape,
The matter being so bare and thin in
proof
As it appears by this—
- LA N.— Yea, so I say;
If she be manifest a murderess—
- SOU.— If!
- What "if" will serve? show me the room
for "if";
I read no reason on the face of "if."
If she be not, what leans our faith upon?
If she be pure or only possible
For judgment to wash clear,—if she be
not
Evident in guilt beyond all evidence,—
- The perfect map where such red lines are
drawn
As set down murder,—if she be less one
whit
I'll take her sin upon myself and turn
Her warrant.
- PAR.— Take a woman's sin on you?
O, while you live, lay no such weight on
faith,
'T will break her back. Sir, as you love
me, do not;
I would not have you take such charge
upon you.
- SOU.—I say I will not; for I can approve
Her very guiltiness.
- PAR.— Nay, that clears all.
But it is strange that one so well reputed,
So perfect in all gentle ways of time
That take men's eyes—in whom the slips
she had
Were her more grace and did increase
reput
To do her good—who might excuse all
blame
That the tongued story of this time could lay
On her most sweet account,—that such a
lady
Should wreak herself so bloodily for words
Upon a shallow and sick-witted fool.
Why, what is she the better, he removed?
Or how doth he impair her, being alive?
There's matter in 't we know not of.
- SOU.— Yea, why?
- For that you speak of her repute, my lord,
I am not perfect in a girl's repute;
It may be other than I think of it;
But in this poor conjectural mind of mine
I cannot see how to live large and loose
Doth put a sounder nerve into repute
Than honest women have. What we did
know of her,
You, I, and all men—
- PAR.— Nay, you tax her far.
- SOU.—I mean we know her commerce
with the king;
Ha? did we not?
- PAR.— Yea, that was broad enough.
- SOU.—Why, well then, how doth she
make up repute,
Being patched so palpably? Here comes
the queen.
- Enter the King, the Queen-Mother, and*
LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.
- CH.—It may be so.

CA.— I would it had less face.
If likelihood could better speak of her,
I should be glad to help it.

SOU.— Marked you this?

CA.—But shame can hide no shame so
manifest;

It must all out.

CH.— I do not say it must.

CA.—Why, it was open, proof doth
handle it;

The poor brain-bitten railer chid at her,
Scoffed in lewd words, made speech in-
sufferable

Of any temperate ear; no colder cheek
But would have burnt at him; myself was
angered,

Could not wear patience through; and she
being quick,

Tendering her state as women do, too
slight

To push her reason past her anger's bound.

SOU.—Did you note that? she speaks
my proper way.

CA.—She being such doth with my hands
resolve

To whip him out of life; and in this humor—

CH.—Soft now; I must get proof; what
makes your highness

In such a matter?

CA.— I gave her glove to him.

CH.—O, this is well; and yet she murder-
ed him?

PAR.—What says your judgment to't?
have you no quirk? (*Aside.*)

CA.—She gave it me; I had the glove of
her.

PAR.—Does the wind blow that side?

SOU.— Notice the king; he chafes.

[*Exeunt* PARDAILLAN, SOUBISE,
and LA NOUE.

CH.—Our sister says she did outswear
you all

She never saw the glove.

CA.— Put her to proof;

Let her out'rag by evidence evidence,
And proof unseat by proof.

CH.— Call her to me.

CA.—That were unfit; you shall not see
her.

CH.— Shall not!

Who puts the "shall not" on me? is it
you?

CA.—Not I, but absolute need and
present law;

She is not well; and till she be made whole
There shall no trial pass upon her proof;
She shall have justice; it may be she is
clear,

And this large outward likelihood may lie;
Then she were sharply wronged; and in
that fear

And also for dear love I bear to her
I have removed her with no care but mine
To a more quiet room; where till more
surety

She doth abide in an unwounded peace,
Having most tender guard.

CH.— I'll write her comfort;
For I do know she has much wrong in
this.

CA.—I will commend you verbally to
her:

The other were some scandal.

CH.— Pray you, do;
Look you speak gently; I would not have
you loud,

For she will weep all pity into you
To see her cheek so marred. Look you
say well;

Say I do nothing fear but she is wronged,
And will do right; yea, though I loved her
not

(As truly I am not so hard in love
But I can see her fault, which is much
pity,—

A very talking error in weak tongues)
I would not have her wronged. Look you
say that.

CA.—I will say anything.

CH.— Now, my fair lord,
Have I done well?

LA R.—Most justly and most well.

CH.—You would not else, were you a
king of mine?

LA R.—I would do this, even merely as
you do.

CH.—What say you to this evidence?

LA R.— That it doth
Amaze my sense of what is proven; for,
If there be witness in the touch and grasp
Of things so palpable, and naked likeli-
hood

Outpoises all thin guess and accident,
I must believe what makes belief rebel
And turn a proclaimed liar. For I am
sure

That she whose mouth this proof doth
dwell upon,

I mean the virtuous damozel Yolande,

Is past the tax of lying; she is as pure
As truth desires a man.

CH.— It is most strange;
Let's find some smother talk. Have you
not seen

My book of deer, what seasons and what
ways

To take them in? I finished it last night.

LA R.—I have not seen it.

CH.— Only this throws me out;
(The verses, Peter Ronsard made them
rhyme)

I'll show you where; come, you shall get
me through;

You are perfect at such points.

LA R.— Your praise outruns me.

CH.—No, not a whit; you are perfect in
them; come.

[*Exeunt King and LA ROUCHEFOUCAULD.*]

CA.—This is the proper cooling of hot
blood;

Now is she lost in him. Say, she doth
live; to put

Earth in her lips and dusty obstacle

May not be worth my pains. She cannot
thwart me either;

For say I did enfranchise her to-night,
Give air and breath to her loud'st speech,
she could not

Wrench-one man's faith awry. Yet since I
know

Security doth overlean itself

And bruise its proper side, I will not do't.

Or say I win her back; and being so won,
I may find serviceable times for her

To spy upon king fool; this coolness
thawed

Would make a heat indeed. There's use
for her

And room withal; if she leave tenderness
And this girl's habit of a changing blood,
I can as well unload her of this weight

As I did lay it on; which being kept up

May make her life bend under it, and crack

The sensible springs of motion. I will put
proof to it;

Favor of love, promise and sweet regard,

Large habit, and the royal use of time,

May her slight fear as potently outpoise

As wisdom doth, weighed in a steadier
brain. [Exit.

SCENE II. *Denise's Apartment in the
same.*

Enter DENISE and Attendant.

ATT.—How do you now?

DEN.— Well; I do ever well;

It comes not new to me, this well-doing.

I sleep as women do that feed well, I feed

As those who wear the gold of doing well.

What pricks you so to ask? Why, this is
quaint,

I cannot brace my body like a maid's,

Cannot plait up my hair, gather a pin,

But you must catch me with "How do
you it?"

ATT.—I made but question of that mood
you had

Some three hours back, when you fell pale
and wept,

Saying fever clenched you fast and you
would die;

That mood forgets you.

DEN.— Not a whit; you slip

Strangely between conjectures of two
sides,

The white and black side. I am very well.

They say "do well" if one does virtuously;

May I not say so?

ATT.— Doubtless you may well.

DEN.—Yea, the word "well" is tied
upon your tongue.

Try now some new word, prithee some fair
phrase,

Rounder i' the mouth than "well": I hate
this "well";

I pray you learn some lessons of a jay

To use new words. I will provide me one

That shall say nothing all day through but
"ill,"

And "ill" again. I'll have a clock tick
"well"

And hang it by your bed to wake you mad

Because you chatter me half sick with
"well."

ATT.—I will say nothing lest you carp
at me,

Planting offence in most pure sentences;

Mistake falls easy.

DEN. Truly it doth fall.

All matters fall out somehow in God's
work,

And round the square edges of them flat.

But I fall wrong, slip someway short of
heaven,

And earth fails too, and leaves me dismal
hell,

Naked as brown feet of unburied men.

Think: you ~~say~~ hold mere talk like ours in
hell?

Go up and down with wretched shoulders
stooped
And wried backs under the strong burdens
bruised
And thwarted bodies without pleasant
breath?

ATT.—I do conceive it as clean fire that
burns
And makes a gray speck of the gracious
corn:
God keep us that we burn not in such
wise.

DEN.—That is a prayer, and prayers are
sweet. But then

We'll have no praying; only such as this,—
I prithee set a finger to my load,
Help me from fainting; take my knife and
smite

And put the blood to cool upon my mouth.
Such dull work too as carls get sickened
with

And turn to die into the black rank straw,
We shall set hands to; all fair lords and
knights,

Great kings with gold work wrought into
their hair,

Strong men of price and such as play or
sing,

Delicate ladies with well-shodden feet,
Tall queens in silk wear and all royal
things,

Yea, priests of noble scarlet and chaste
mark,

All shall God set awork. Peradventure
too

When our arms loosen in the elbow-joints
With the strong rage and violent use of
toil,

He may send patient breath to ease our
lips

And heal us for a little weeping-space,
But then in talking each with each will
grow

Worse shame and wholly fashioned wretch-
edness,

And either will go back to mere short
moans

And the hard pulse of his outlabored hour
Rather than talk. We shall lie down and
curse

Stupidly under breath, like herdsmen; turn
And hide and cover from all witness up,
Each his own loathing and particular sore;
Sit with chins fallen and lank feet asquat,
Letting the dismal head work its own way,

Till the new stripe shall pluck us up to
task,

Crossing with cruelties our own bad will,
Crowning our worst with some completed
bad

Too ill to face. Ay, this should be their
way;

For fire and all tormented things of earth
Are parcels of good life, have use and will,
Learn worthiest office and supply brave
wants;

And not the things that burn up clean
make hell,

Not pain, hate, evil, actual shame or sense,
But just the lewd obedience, the dead
work,

The beaten service of a barren wage
That gets no reaping.

ATT.—I cannot taste the purpose of
your speech.

Pray you lie down.

DEN.— I will not. Well it were
To set our upper lives on some such guise
And have a perfect record when one dies
How things shall be thereafter. A know-
ledge armed

Of the most sharp and outermost event
Is half a comfort. I do think for one
That God will set me into certain hell,
Pick me to burn forth of his yellow spears
Like any tare as rank. Also I doubt
There shall be some I had to do withal
Packed in the same red sheaf. How will
each look,

Tavannes, no leaner than the hound he
was,

Or Guise beard-singed to the roots? the
queen-mother

Tied by the hair to—I get idle now.
A grave thing is it to feel sure of hell,
But who should fear it if I slip the chance
And make some holy blunder in my end,
Translating sin by penitence? For none
Sinned ever yet my way; treason and lust
Sick apes, red murder a familiar fool,
To this new trick set by them, will be
shamed

In me forever; yea, contempt of men
Shall put them out of office. He that lusts,
Envies, or stabs, shall merely virtuous be,
And the lank liar fingering at your throat
A friend right honest. That roadway
villain's knife

That feels for gold i' the womb, shall be
not hated;

And the cold thief who spills a popular
breath
Find grace o' the gallows; why do men
hang poor knaves,
Cut throats while mine goes smooth? Now
I think on't,
I will put condemnation to their act.
By mine own will and work. I pray you
kill me,
I will not hurt you.

ATT.—Alas, she is mad, dear lady—

DEN.—Yes, dear; I shall be dear some
three days hence,

And paid full price. Dost thou not think
I am mad,

I am not; they would fain have lied me mad,
Burnt up my brain and strung my sense
awry,

In so vile space imprisoning my wants
I can help nothing. Here sit I now, beast-
like,

Loathsomely silenced: who, if I had the
tongue

Wherewith hard winter warns the unblanch-
ed sea,

Would even outspoke the winds with large
report,

Proclaiming peril. But being this I am
I get no help at all. One maimed and
dumb

That sees his house burn, such am I. My
God!

Were it not sweeter to be finished well
Than still hold play with hangman anger?

Enter the Queen-Mother.

CA.—Leave us, girl. (Exit *Attendant*.
Nay, sit; this reverence hath no seed in
you;

Sit still.

DEN.—Madam—

CA.—Good lady, will you sit?

DEN.—So you be come to bind more
shame on me,

I can well bear more shame.

CA.—You are still foolish;

How have I set this anger in your face?

I make no parcel of these tears of yours;

No word that gets upon your lips to weep

Have I given use for.

DEN.—Ay, no use you say?

But I dream not that hold this hand in
that,

But I dream not that take your eyes with
mine;

But I dream not I am that very thing
That as a taint inside the imperilled flesh
Have made corruption of the king's close
will,

Put scarlet treason on his purpose, marred
The face of confidence, plucked words
from trust,

Taught murder to walk smooth and set his
feet

Upon the ways of faith; I am that thing,
I would it were some other.

CA.—Have you yet done?

DEN.—Yea, I have done all this.

CA.—I do believe you;
And though your thoughts ungently look
my way,

I have such sorrow for you sown at heart
As you should reap a liberal help thereof
Would you but pay thin thanks.

DEN.—No, I'll no thanks;

Yea, though I die, I will not thank you;
no;

For I can hold my breath into my lip,
Or twist my hair to choke my throat upon,
Or thrust a weak way thus to my rent
heart

Even with these bare and feeble fingers
here.

Making each nail a knife; look you, I'll
do't.

CA.—You talk too wide; I came to do
you good.

DEN.—That were good news indeed;
things new, being good,

Come keener to put relish in the lip;
I pray you let me see this good 't the face,
Look in its eyes to find dead colors out,
For deadly matters make up good for me.

CA.—Nay, you shall find my favor large
as love;

I make no talk of gold, no costly words,
No promise, but this merely will I say,
You holding by me grapple to a hold
Full of all gracious office and such wealth
As love doth use for surety; such good
riches

As on these latter lips of womanhood
Are sweet as early kisses of a mouth
Scented like honey. Keep but fast my
side,

No time shall hew the planted root away
That faith of your dear service sets in me.
Nor violence of mistempered accident
Cleave it across.

DEN.—I would I were clear of you.

What would you get? You are a great
queen, grave soul,
Crown-shaped i' the head; your work is
wonderful

And stoops men to you by the neck, but I
Can scanty read it out. I know just
this,—

Take you this patience from my wretched
lips,

Pluck off this evidence of the bolted steel,
Made wide the passage of my chambered
feet

And I will take a witness in my mouth
To set the cries of all the world on you
And break my shame to lead your neck
with half

Like a thief's neck.

CA.—You are slower than weighed lead
To use my speech aright. But though you
be

Twice dull or thrice, and looser of your lip
Than that swift breath that outwings rumor,
yet

No babble slipt upon my purposes
Could manage me a peril, no tongue's trip
Cross nie between. Who puts belief
to speech

Grown from some theft, that stains me with
report

From mine own lips caught like infection?
Look,

Though you could preach my least word
spoken out

To the square in Paris where noise thickens
most,

It hurts me nothing. 'Tis not that popu-
lous tongue

That savors insolence and raw distaste
Can riot out my will. Nay, keep your
cheeks:

I would not kill the color past all help,
For I have care of you; and liberal fruit
Shall you reap of it, and eat quiet bread
When white want shrinks the rest.

DEN.— I will not do it.
Nay, though I were your foolish work-
woman,

There is no room for good to do me good;
That blessed place wherein love kissed me
first

Is now waxed bare enough. I might ask
alms

Of meanest men, being by mine own repute
Made less than time makes them; I am not
good nor fair,

For the good made on me by love is gone,
And that affection of the flattered blood
Which fills this holy raiment of the soul
With inwrought shapeliness and outside
rose

Keeps now no tide in me; the unpulsed
sense

Hath like a water settled and gets flat
As dead sands be at utmost ebb that drink
The drained salt o' the sea. Nay, to talk
thus

Is foolish as large words let out in drink;
Therefore I am not wise; what would
you have of me?

CA.—Nay, nothing but your peace,
which I'll assure

Beyond large time's assault. Yet I'll do
something with you,

Put sudden bitter in your sweet of lips,
A knife's edge next your throat, that when
you drink

Shall spill out wine i' the blood,—some-
thing like this;

Feed you upon the doubt, and gnash and
grieve,

Feeding so trapped. You'll show fierce teeth
at me,

Take threats of me into your milky mouth?
You'll maim my ruined patience, put me
out

Of sober words and use of gravities?

DEN.—Yea, I can read you are full-
tempered now;

But your sharp humors come not in my fear.

CA.—Yea so? high-tempered said she?
yea, true, true,—

I'm angered,—give me water to cool out
This o'er-tongued fever of intemperance,

Bid one come in and see how wroth
I am;

Am I not angered now? see you,—and
you,—

Do not I chafe and froth the snaffle white
With the anger in my mouth? see, do I
not?

—Thou hast the tender impotence of talk
That men teach daws; a pitiful thing,—in
sooth

I am not so chafed; I have something in
my will

That makes me chide at thee, my play-
thing; look,

I do half choose to chide at it, sweet
wretch,

It almost chafes me such a daw should live,

DEN.—It chafes me too; I will not be forgiven;
If shame go smooth and blood so supple it,
Kingdoms will turn from the grave word of man
To side with hooféd herds; I were best die
And get no grace of God.

CA. "No grace" it said?
Dost thou make such a gracious dunce of God

To look thee out in the time's jarring sum,
Choose thy room forth and hearken after thee
To find thee place and surety and eased breath?

God's no such bat to be at pains for this.
Pray now, go pray; speak some wise word or two

To pluck his mercies back your way.
God's name!

It marvels me how any fool i' the flesh
Must needs be sure of some fore-facing help

To make him fragrant means for living well,
Some blind God's favor bound across his head

To stamp him safe in the world's imperilling.

Pardon thy sin? who blabs thy pretty slips

I' the ear of his broad knowledge, scores thy stains,

Makes him partaker of all times and rooms
Where thou hast made shuddering occasions
To try Eve's huskless apple with thy teeth?
Doth such care dwell on thy breath's lean reserves,

Thy little touches and red points of shame?
I tell thee, God is wise and thou twice fool,

That wouldst have God con thee by rote, and lay

This charge in thee, shift off that other charge,

And mete thine inward inches out by rule
That hath the measure of spheréd worlds in it

And limit of great stars. Wilt thou serve yet?

DEN.—Not you herein at all; though you spake right,

As it may be this speech does call truth kin,

I would not sin beyond my ancient way,

And couple with new shame.

CA.— This is your last;
For the sad fruit that burgeons out of this
Take your own blame, for I will none—

You, there,
You that make under uses of the door
Leave off your ear-work and come in; nay, come;

Enter YOLANDE.

Here's use for you; look well upon this girl,

Count well the tender feet that make her flesh

And her soft inches up; nay, view them close;

For each poor part and specialty of her
You hold sharp count to me; I'll have you wise;

You that are portress shall be jailer—you,
Mark me, just you—I would not have you slip;

Come not into my danger; bnt keep safe,
I do you good indeed.

YOL.— I will do truly.
CA.—Farewell, sweet friend; (*to Denise*)

I am right grieved that you
Will mix my love with your impatience.

Though I more thinly fare in your esteem,
Fare you yet well for mine, and think of me

More graciously than thus; so have you peace

As I do wish you happily to have.
God give you sleep.—Look heedfully to her

As you would have me prosperous to you.
Exeunt severally.

SCENE III. *The Marshall's House.*

Enter two Captains.

1 CAP.—May this be true that we are bidden so?

2 CAP.—I think it is.

1 CAP.—Did the king speak with you?

2 CAP.—No, the lord marshal,

1 CAP.—He is hot on this;

But did he tell you to be forth to-night?

2 CAP.—Before the chime of twelve.

1 CAP.—Why then we have

A broken four hours' work upon us yet
Between this time and that most bloody one.

There is a yellow point upon the sky
Where the last upper sun burns sideways out,

Scoring the west beneath.

2 CAP.— I see the mark:
It shines against the Louvre; it is high gone.

1 CAP.—Yea, the strong sun grows sick;
but not to death.

Which side have you to take?

2 CAP.— The south side, I.

1 CAP.—I to the west. Would this were really through.

2 CAP.—Who gave you news o' the office?

1 CAP.— Maurevel.

2 CAP.—O, he that hurt the admiral some days back?

That plague-botch of the Guisards?

1 CAP.— Yea, the same:

I had a mind to strike him in the mouth.

2 CAP.—Why had you so? you have the better place.

1 CAP.—O, sir, in such hard matters he does best

Who does not most. I had rather be a dog,

One half unleashed to feed on bitten orts

Than have his post herein.

2 CAP.— Whose? Maurevel's?

1 CAP.—Even his; for he has carved him a broad piece

Out of the body of this wounded town.

2 CAP.—What, does the work so startle you? for me,

I hold it light as kissing a girl's head.

1 CAP.—If they should face us, well; but to put knives

Into their peaceable and sleeping beds—

2 CAP.—You talk too like a fool. I loathe so far

Their slow lank ways of envious gravity,

Their sparing pride and lavish modesty,

Cunning so tempered with hot insolence

As in that Pardaillan—in him or him—

I say I do abhor them, and in my soul

I think there's no priest half so glad as I

To rid them out of wrong-doing. We are Most kind to them; for give their sin more

space,

Each year should heap up hell upon their backs

And leave them hotter; whereas we rid them now

And they just die half-damned.

1 CAP.— You are merciful.

2 CAP.—I would be so; for him whose spleen is thick,

Made bitter and side-clogged with cruel use,

I hate as much as these.

1 CAP.— The marshal tarries;

I doubt there will be nothing done.

2 CAP.— You doubt?

Say you desire it; if you pray for it,

Shame not to answer your own hope.

1 CAP.— I do not;

I should be glad if all went out in speech And never smutched our hands with smoke thereof.

2 CAP.—This is your poor and barren piety

That mercy calls offence, and law doth put Rebuke upon. I do not praise it in you.

1 CAP.—Do you mislike it?

2 CAP.— If I should say I did—

1 CAP.—What then?

2 CAP.—I did you nothing less than right.

1 CAP.—You will not say so.

2 CAP.— By your head, I do;

I will and do.

1 CAP.—This will take time to mend.

2 CAP.—Mend it your way; take time to patch it with;

My hand shall not be slack. Here comes the marshal.

Enter TAVANNES.

TAV.—Now, sirs, how are your men disposed? have you

Had pains with them?

1 CAP.—Mine gave no pains at all.

TAV.—Why, well; I would the temper of such men

Were made the habit of all France. Sir, yours?

2 CAP.—I may say better of them; I could not

So eagerly give tongue to my desire

But they did grasp it first; such emulous haste

To jostle speech aside with the push of act I have not known.

TAV.— Good; they do hunger then?

2 CAP.—Sir, most impatiently.

TAV.— Their galls are hot?

2 CAP.—Enough to burn out patience from the world.

TAV.—Such I would have; good dogs, keen in the feet,

Swoln in the spleens of them; 't is very good.

Your presence flags, sir,

I CAP. Mine, my lord?

TAV.— Ay, sir.

You have the gait of an unmaiden'd girl
That carries violence in her girdle. Humph!
I do not relish it.

I CAP. My lord—

TAV.— Ay, what?

Speak your own way; make answer; nay,
be swift.

I CAP.—My lord, you have not known
me blink or blench

In the red face of death; no peril hath
Put fear upon my flesh, altered the heat
That colors on my cheek the common blood
To a dead sickness or a bruise of white;
Nor doth it now.

TAV.—No, doth not? are you sure?

I CAP.—You do not think so.

TAV.— Nay, there's no peril in't.
But you had more; make out the worst;
get on.

I CAP.—Truly I have a motion in my
blood

Forbidding such a matter to receive
Smooth entertainment there; I would be
fain

To shift the service off; my fellow here
Knows I regard it something loathfully.

TAV.—Ay, do you, sir?

2 CAP.— Indeed he said so.

TAV.— Said?

2 CAP.—But I do know him for a noble
man

That would acknowledge all things honor-
ably,

Commune with no base words, nor wear
such office

As cowards do; I must report him such.

TAV.—You must! I pray show me what
humor then

Crosses him thus at point.

2 CAP.— I will not think.

TAV.—Sir, you that have such tender
make at heart,

That wear a woman in your blood, and put
Your mother on your cheeks—you that are
pure,

That will not fail,—you piece of dainty talk
Pluck me this halting passion from your
heart,

Or death shall nail it there.

I CAP.— I do not fear you, sir.

TAV.—Observe me, sir, I do not use to
threat;

Either take up your office for this time
And use it honorably, or I will leave you
No place at all. What sort of fool are you
To start at such a piece of lawful work
As is the manage of more noble hands
Than are familiar with your beard? You
are

Too gross a fool.

I CAP.—My lord, you wrong me much.

2 CAP.—Sir, you push far; he is a gentle-
man.

TAV.—The Devil shall make a better of
strawn dung;

I do proclaim him for a thief, a coward,
A common beggar of safe corner holes,
A chamber hiring to wash pots—Begone,
I will not bear such knaves. Take you his
place.

Go, go, eat scraps.

I CAP.— Sir, you shall do me right.

TAV.—I say thou art a knave, a side-
stair thief,—

God's precious body! I am sick with
anger

That such a pad of slack worm-eaten silk
Should wear the name of any soldiery.
Give up thine office.

I CAP.—You do yourself much shame.
[Exit.]

TAV.—Fie on him, rag! frayed velvet
face! I'd beat him

But for pure shame. So, is he gone?
Make after

And push him out at door. Take you his
place.

Attend me presently.

2 CAP.—My, lord, I shall. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. *The Louvre.*

*The Queen-Mother, MARGARET, Duchess
of Lorraine, and Ladies.*

CA.—No, no, the scandal stands with
us, not you

That have no lot in it. Well, God be
praised,

It does not touch me inwardly and sharp
To be so rid of him; but I do pity
The means of his removal, from my heart
I pity that. 'Tis a strange deed; I have
not

Seen any that may call it brother, since
That dame's who slew her lord, being
caught in middle

Of some more lewd delight; her name
now?

DUCH.— Châteaudun.

CA.—True, so it was; I thank you;
Châteaudun.

MAR.—How says she yet? will she confess his death?

CA.—No, but outbears all comfort with keen words.

MAR.—Truth, I commend her for it; I would not have her

Show the wet penitence of fools that are
More weak than what they do.

CA.— I partly hold with you.
Have we no music? Nay, I would hear none;

I am not bowed that way; my sense will
not stoop

To the pleasurable use of anything.

Is it not late?

MAR.— I think it wears to nine.

CA.—Nay, it lies further; I am sure it
does.

DUCH.— Madam, it is not late.

CA.— I say it is;
If I am pleased to reckon more than you,
It shall be late.

MAR.— I promised at this time
To be about my husband; if I fail,
My faith is breached with flaw of modesty.

DUCH.— Nay, go not yet.

CA.—Will you lay hands on her?

DUCH.— I do beseech you—

MAR.—What makes you cling to that.

DUCH.—If you would show me kindness,
do not go.

CA.—You play love's fool awry.

MAR.— Show me some reason.

DUCH.—I have no reason broader than
my love:

And from the sweetest part of that sweet
love

I do entreat you that you will not go,
But wake with me to-night. I am not well.

MAR.—Sister, I am quite lost in your
desire.

CA.—What; are you ill? how shall it get
you whole

To wake the iron watches of the night
Companioned with hard ache of weariness
And bitter moods that pain feeds full upon?
Come, you are idle; I will wake with you,
If you must wake; trouble not her so much.

MAR.—Indeed it would a little tax me.

CA.— Nay,
Think not upon it; get you hence and
sleep.

Commend me to your lord; bid him thank
me

That he to-night doth side you; it is a
grace

Worth honorable thanks.

DUCH.— Still I beseech you
To keep me company some poor two hours;
My prayer is slight, more large my need of
it:

I charge you for pure pity stay with me.

CA.—Are you gone mad? what makes
your prayer in this?

As you regard my wrath or my fair mood,
And love me better peaceable than harsh,
Make a quick end of words.—Margaret,
good night.—

Nay, sit you close.—At once good night,
my love;

I pray you do my message.

MAR.— Madam, I will;
No less fair night with you and with my
sister,
Whom I shall look to see as whole in
health

As sound in spirit.

CA.—I will take pains for it;
She shall get healed with pains; have no
such fear.

[Exit MARGARET.
Are you so much a fool? by heaven I am
ashamed

That ever I did use your faith like mine,
Nay that some blood of mine was lost on
you

To make such shallow stuff as you are of.

DUCH.—Madam, you have not thought—
CA.— What ailed my wits

To lay so precious office on your brain,
Which is filled out with female matters,
marred

With milky mixtures? I do loathe such
women

Worse than a leper's mouth.

DUCH.— Consider but her state.
It is your flesh, my sister and my blood,
That must look death in the eyes; you bid
her hold

Keen danger by the skirt, gripe hands with
him;

For those that scape the edges of your
men,

Being refuged in her lodging, may as well
Turn their own points on her; if none
escape,

Then in the slaying of her husband's men!

She may well chance on some one's iron
side

And death mistake her end.

CA.— I did mistake
More grossly, to believe the blood in you
Was not so mean in humor as it is.
She is safe enough; he that but strikes at
her

With his bare hand doth pluck on his bare
head

Sudden destruction. Say she were not
safe,

Must we go back for that and miss the
way

That we have painfully carved out and
hewn

From the most solid rivet of strong time?

DUCH.—If you would bid her watch,

CA.— I will do nothing.

DUCH.—Let me but speak to her.

CA.— You shall not move;
This thing is heavier than you think of it
And has more cost than yours. You shall
sit still,

And shall not frown or gape or wag your
head,

As you respect the mood of my misliking.

Enter Attendant.

ATT.—Madam, the Duke of Anjou—

CA.— What would he?

ATT.—He prays you dearly be about the
king;

What he would have I cannot tell; I am
sure

He is much moved, and, as I think, with
fear.

CA.—This is an absolute summons. I
will go. [*Exit Attendant.*]

So, get you in; you have no lot beyond;
That I should have such need to use such
fools!

Get you to bed and sleep.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I. *The Louvre.*

*The King, Queen-Mother, BRANTÔME,
TAVANNES, LA ROCHEFOUCAULD, TE-
LIGNY, and Attendants.*

Charles.

PUT up the dice; you do not play me
fair.

CA.—Indeed the cast did lie too much
his way.

LA R.—Do me right, sir; the chance so
thrown on me

May come to serve your hand.

CH.— Nay, God forbid!

I would not fare so well, less men should
scent

The sudden savor of sharp-relished ills
To snuff my luck behind. Put them away.

LA R.—So I may take my leave, my
lord, I will.

CH.—Abide a little.

LA R.—Sir, in pure faith, I may not.

CH.—Lay down your chariness; I pray
you stay;

I am your friend that do entreat you stay

To help me use my better humors well.

LA R.—This grace of yours doth jar
with time in me.

CA.—Fair son, put no dispute in mar-
riage; think,

Our noble friend is yet i' the green of time,
The summer point of wedlock; cross him
not.

CH.— No, he shall stay.

CA.— I love him none the less
That would enfranchise his obedience,
Saying "let pass."

BRA.— I have known an honest lady
That would have bit her lips atwain for
spite

Sooner than slip her lord's obedience so

And slacken the remitted service of him

For such light points; I do remember me—

CA.—This tale will hold you, sir.

BRA.— I bade her choose a friend,
She seeming bare of any courtesy

That is well done to such; I bade her
choose—

LA R.—I take a second leave.

BRA.— As 'twere for form,—

"Seeing, look you," said I, "a lady's
office is

To endure love and wear a good man's
name

As the lace about her wrist"—

CA.— You shall not go.

LA R.—Sir, needs I must; you shall
well pardon it.

BRA.—She with a face, as thus, let side-
ways down,

Catching her page i' the eye,—a thing so
bearded

As are a woman's lips—

CA.— My lord Bourdeilles,
I pray you take my way, I'll hear this out.

BRA.— Please you so suffer me—

CA.— Fair son, good night.

[*Exeunt CATH., BRANT., and Attendants.*]

CH.— Good night, sweet mother.—Is she truly gone?

Then I will pray you leave not me to-night;
I'll not to bed; I would not have you go;
Yea, by God's blood, I put my heart indeed

Into this prayer of mine. Come, pleasure me;

It might avail you; what, by God's own face,

I think I sue to you. Is this much alms
That you should please me?

LA R.— Sir, for my poor half,
I must tie thanks upon the neck of No
And turn him forth of me.

CH.— Then you keep here?

LA R.— Good faith, I cannot so; and I well think

This lord speaks with me.

TEL.— Even your sense, indeed.

CH.— You use me hardly, but my wish to you

Lives none the less a good and honest wish;
So, if my meaning tastes not sweet to you,
Farewell, yea well. One see my dear friends out.

LA R., TEL.— Good night, fair lord.

[*Exeunt LA ROCH. and TEL.*]

CH.— I would have kept them yet.
So, if a man have sight of a big stone,
And will needs trip and sprawl with a
bruised head,

Is it my fault that show him such a stone?
Or say one filches a fair sword of mine
To rip himself at side, is my sin there?

Nay not that much, but walking with my sword

It galls him in the thigh; am I his hurt?

Twice, yea now thrice, if you shall mark me, sir,

Yea, God knows well I sued three times to them,

I would have had all scars keep off their flesh,

But God's will is not so.

TAV.— You do the wiser

To let them pass.

CH.— Why truly so I think.

But I am heart-stung for these; this
Téligny

That might have laid a word of help my way

And kept such sullen lips of doubtfulness.

I have loved him well. The other, see you, sir,

I have twined arms with him, fed from his eyes,

Made a large pleasure out of usual things

Wherein his lot fell evenly with mine,

Laid my heart on him; yea, this singled man

Was as the kin made closest to my flesh

And in the dearest of my secret will

Did as a brother govern. But he may go;

I were fallen wrong too far to pity him;

So, though they mainly mar him with their pikes,

Stab till the flesh hath holes like a big net,
I will not think I am compassionate;

Yea, though my thought of him pricks me at brain,

I will believe I do not pity him.

Show me the matter of your place, your way,

The measure of your men; nay, my sweet lord,

Pray you hold fast on this; be not made pitiful.

Nay, but stand sure; nay, I beseech you, sure. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *Denise's Apartment.*

Enter DENISE.

DEN.— It is the time; had but this solid earth

A capable sense of peril, it should melt

And all disjoint itself; the buikled shape of things

Should turn to waste and air. It is as strange

As is this perilous intent, that men

Should live so evenly to-night; talk, move,

Use contemplation of all common times,

Speak foolishly, make no more haste to sleep

Than other days they do; I have not seen

A man to-day seem graver in the mouth,

Wear slowness on his feet, look sideways out,

Make new the stuff and subject of his speech,

Reason of things, matter of argument,

For such a business. I see death is not
 feared,
 Only the circumstance and clothes of
 death;
 Or else men do not commune more with
 time
 Nor have its purpose in them larger writ
 Than a beast has. Why, I did surely
 think
 Such ill foreknowledge would have mastered
 me
 Quite beyond reason; wrenched my sense
 away,
 Brought it to dull default. But I do live
 and stir;
 Have reasonable breath within my lips;
 Keep my brain sound, and all my settled
 blood
 Runs the right way. Perhaps I sleep and
 dream
 That such things are as my fear dotes upon.
 Why then I should be mad; and being mad
 I might hold sound opinions of my wit
 When it were truly flawed. If I not
 dream
 And have no passionate mixture in my
 brain,
 Large massacre to-night should fill itself
 With slaughtered blood and the live price
 of men.
 Why this? forsooth because of that and
 that,
 For this man's tongue and that man's beard
 or gait,
 For some rank slip of their opinion.
 I see full reason why men slay for hate,
 But for opinion or slack accident
 I get no cause at all. Then I am mad
 That I do think what works so much awry
 And is past reason so, the natural sense
 Doth sicken in receiving it for news.
 To be the absolute act and heart of truth.
 I will not credit this. Yet wherefore am I
 So used as prisoner here? why taxed with
 sin?
 Why watched and kept so hard? called
 murderess?
 I'll be assured of it. You jailer, you—
 And yet I am afraid to call her forth.
 O, she is come.

Enter YOLANDE.

YOL.— Did you not call for me?
 DEN.—I think I did cry out, being
 moved in sleep:

I had a dream of you.

YOL.—

Ay, had you so?

And I had set a waking thought on you.

DEN.—What time is it?

YOL.—

Just hard upon eleven.

DEN.—I have slept four hours. I pray
 you tell me now,

As you are gentle,—I do love you much,—
 Is it my dream I am a prisoner?

YOL.—Did you not call me jailer?

DEN.

True, I did.

Now I begin to patch my dream again
 And find the colors right. I dreamed I
 was

Some sort of evil beast that loved a man,
 And the man's heel did bruise it in the
 neck.

YOL.—Take heed of it; you were a snake
 by this.

DEN.—I do not know; it may be such I
 was.

I dreamed of you too; for you took me up
 And hid me in a cage and gave me food,—
 I think I was a kind of dismal bird,—
 And having eaten of your seed and drunk
 Water more sharp than blood, I waxed all
 through

Into a dull disease of overgrowth
 And so was choked to death; and men
 there came

That roasted me for food, and having
 eaten

All suddenly did break in twain and die.
 That was the dream.

YOL.—

It was a foolish one.

DEN.—Then I fell back to dream of one
 like you

Who held me prisoner; which was
 dangerous;

For I, being grown to mad rebellion,
 Took thought to kill you.

YOL.—That dream was not so good.

DEN.—Why do I say all this? Let me
 get hence,

Only the little part in heaven I have
 I'll kill myself; yea, by God's name I will.

YOL.—Do your own way.

DEN.—You shall be taxed with it,
 (As I, more harmless, am) being guard of
 me;

I will find ways to leave the tax on you.

YOL.—Pleasure yourself; I bid you not
 refrain.

DEN.—It is a most poor mercy that I
 ask.

YOL.—Too much for me.

DEN.—O, it is less in worth
Than God spares barest men; the most
base need on earth
Is richer in his pity than you are
In charitable use of me, who am
Too little for your scorn.

YOL.—I will not do it.

DEN.—Some prayers, long while denied,
are sweeter held
For being late granted; do not so with-
mine;

I will be thankful more than beggars are,
Made rich with grant too soon.

YOL.—Plead not to me;
I have no patience in my ears for you.

DEN.—Think how you use me; even
kings do leave

Some liberty to the worst worm alive,
Some piece of mercy; but you, more hard
than kings,

Show no such grace as the great jailers do
That wear at waist the keys of the world.

You know

'Tis better be whole beggar and have flesh
That is but pinched by weather out of
breath,

Than a safe slave with happy blood i' the
cheek

And wrists ungalled. There's nothing in
the world

So worth as freedom; pluck this freedom
out,

You leave the rag and residue of man
Like a bird's back displumed. That man
that hath not

The freedom of his name, and cannot make
Such use as time and place would please
him with,

But has the clog of service at his heel
Forbidding the sound gait; this is no man
But a man's dog; the pattern of a slave
Is model for a beast.

YOL.—What do you mean by this?

DEN.—To show you what unworthy
pain it is

Your office lays on me.

YOL.—It is my place;
My faith is taken to assure you thus,
And you have bought such usage at my
hands

By your own act.

DEN.—No, by your life, I have not.

YOL.—You are impeached and must
abide the proof.

DEN.—The proof,—ay, proof; do, put
me to the proof.

There is not proof enough upon me known
To stop a needle's bore. The man now
dead

I held my friend, was sorry for his death,
Not pricked for guilt of it. Poor fool, I
would

That I had borrowed such a death of him
And left him better times to boot than do
Keep company with me.

YOL.—I would you had.
Were one no better dead than stained so
much?

I think so; for myself, in such a scale
The weights were easy to make choice of.

DEN.—I would not die.

YOL.—Did you not say his share were
easier borne?

DEN.—'T is like I said so; yet I would
live long.

YOL.—Why would you so? is there
such grace in you

To wear out all the bar and thwart of
time

And take smooth place again? The life
you have,

Like a blown candle held across the wind,
Dies in the use of it; you are not loved,
Or love would kiss out shame from either
cheek,

New-join the broken patience in your
eyes,

Comfort the pain of your so scarred repute
Where the brand aches on it; honored you
are not,

For the loud breath of many-mouthed
esteem

Cries harsher on you than on common
thieves

When they filch life and all; you are not
secure,

For the most thin divisions of a day
That score the space between two breaths,

to you
Are perilous implements edged with all
hate

To use upon your life; you are not happy
either,

For guilty, shame doth bruise your side
with lead,

Or clean, why rumor stabs you in the face,
Spits in your mouth. What sweet is in
this life

That you would live upon?

DEN.— I do not know;
But I would live; though all things else be
sharp,
Death staves more bitter than them all; I
would not
Touch lips with death.

YOL.— No? I have no such doubt.

DEN.—Is it your place to make me
friends with death?

YOL.—It is my pity.

DEN.— I should find it so
Were I the cushion for a fool's feet, or
A fool indeed of yours.

YOL.— I called you none.

DEN.—I were the bell i' the worst fool's
cap alive
If I rang right to this wrong breath of
yours.

You talk to get me harmed.

YOL.— Put off that fear.

DEN.—I will not truly; you would talk
me out,
Be rid of me this whispering way, this
fashion
That pulls on death by the ear; I feel your
wisdom;
'Tis craft thick-spun, but I shall ravel it.

YOL.—This is your garment that you
thrust me in.

DEN.—It must not be so late; there will
be time;
I was a fool to call it over late.
Give up your keys.

YOL.—What madness bites you now?

DEN.—She called you jailer; give me up
the keys;
You have the keys; the outer door is fast;
If this be madness I am friends with it;
Give me the keys.

YOL.— Will you put hands on me?

DEN.—I'll have them out, though God
would make you man

To use me forcibly.

YOL.— I have, none such;
Threaten me not, or you shall smite your-
self.

DEN.—I say, the keys.

YOL.— What will you do to me?

DEN.—Keep there, you get not out.

YOL.— Are you stark crazed?

DEN.—It may look like enough. What
chain is that?

Give me the chain.

YOL.— I swear I have them not.

DEN.—I do not ask for them. Give me
the chain;

Pray you now, do; good truth you are not
wise

To use me so; I know you have no keys.
Give me the chain; soft, soft—

YOL.— Here are the keys.

Take them and let me pass.

DEN.— I thank you, no;

If I be mad I must do warily

Or they will trap me. Get you into my
chamber;

Now am I twice the sinew of all you
And twice as wise. I say, get in; God's
love!

How you do pull my patience! in sound
wits

It were too hard to bear. Make haste, I
say. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III. A Cabinet.

Enter the Queen-Mother and TAVANNES.

CA.—So, you did see them forth?

TAV.— Madam, I did;
The king doth fare by this more temperately

CA.—If he turn white and stagger at his
point,

It is too late. The mortal means of danger
Are well abroad; and this sole work o' the
world

Fit to set hands to. How do you feel by
this?

TAV.—Why, well; as if my blood were
full of wine.

CA.—I am hot only in the palm of the
hands.

Do you not think, sir, some of these dead
men,

Being children, dreamed perhaps of this?
had fears

About it? somewhat plucked them back,
who knows,

From wishing to grow men and ripen up
For such a death to thrust a sickle there?

TAV.—I never found this woman mixed
in you.

CA.—No.—I am certain also that this
hour

Goes great with child-birth and with fortu-
nate seed,

Worth care to harvest; sons are born and
die,

Yea, and choke timeless in the dead strait
womb,

Of whom we know not; each day breeds
worse: it is

The general curse of seasons.

TAV.— Well, what help?

CA.—True.—It hurts little for a man to
die,

If he be righteous. Were I a swordsman
born,

A man with such red office in my hands
As makes a soldier,—it would touch me
not

To think what milk mine enemy's mouth
hath drunk,

When both were yearlings a span long.
My God!

It is too foolish that conceit of blood
Should stick so on the face; I must look
red;

Give me the little mirror-steel; now see;
Here is no painting.

TAV. Yea, but let me go

CA.—It is man's blood that burns so
deep and bites

No crying cleans it. If one kill a dog,
The spot sticks on your skirt as water
might;

The next rain is a worse thing Humph:
I see;

We have some hot and actual breath in us
That blood lets out; we feed not as they do;
So the soul comes and makes all motion
new;

One guesses at it.

TAV.— Will you go mad for this?

CA.—No.—If one strike me on the
mouth or breast,

And I am hurt and bleed to death,—is
that

Murder? I would not kill them for their
blood;

God's mercy! wherein can their blood
serve me?

Let all go through.

TAV.— Madam, I take my leave;
All shall run out ere we two speak again.

CA.—Hark! I hear shots; as God shall
pity me,

I heard a shot. Who dies of that? yea,
now,

Who lies and moans and make some inches
red?

TAV.—Not for an hour yet; the first
dial-rim

Makes the first shot.

CA.—The noise moves in my head,

Most hotly moves; pray you keep clear
of me.

God help my woman's body for a fool's
I must even sit.

TAV.— Be patient with your cause;
Give it all room, then you get heart again;
I know those ways.

CA.—Too sharp to drink, too sharp,
Sweet Christ of mine; blood is not well to
drink,

God put this cup some little off my mouth.
Yea, there it catches in mine eyes like
smoke,

The smell of blood, it stings and makes
one weep;

So, God be patient till I breathe again.

TAV.—Are you fallen foolish? woman,—
madam,—thou!

Take heart to speak at least.

CA.— I will take heart.
What is there in it that should bar my
breath,

Or make me babble stark across the sense
As I did then? can the flesh merely
prate

With no mind in it to fall praying, ha?

Give me some wine. Go out and cheer
your men;

Bid them be bold; say, work is worth such
pains;

Be quick and dangerous as the fire that
rides

Too fast for thunder. Tell them the king,
the king

Will love each man, cherish him sweetly,
say,

And I will hold him as that brother is
Whom one flesh covered with me.—Will it
rain?

TAV.—No; the wide ends of the sky are
clear with stars;

It is broad moon-time.

CA.— I would fain see rain.
Art thou so slow of purpose, thou great
God,

The keenest of thy sighted ministers
Can catch no knowledge what we do? for
else

Surely the wind would be as a hard fire,
And the sea's yellow and distempered
foam

Displease the happy heaven; wash corn
with sand

To waste and mixture; mar the trees of
growth;

Choke birds with salt, breach walls with
tided brine
And chase with heavy water the horned
brood
Past use of limit; towers and popular
streets
Should in the middle green smother and
drown,
And havoc die with fulness.—I should be
mad,

I talk as one filled through with wine;
thou, God,

Whose thunder is confusion of the hills
And with wrath sown abolishes the fields,
I pray thee if thy hand would ruin us,
Make witness of it even this night that is
The last for many cradles, and the grave
Of many reverend seats; even at this turn,
This edge of season, this keen joint of
time,

Finish and spare not. If no thunder came
When thou wert full of wrath to the fierce
brim,

Next year would spit on worship.—I am
faint yet;

See you, I have to chatter these big words
To keep my head straight; each small
nerve it hath

Is like a chord pulled straight to play upon
Till the string ache at sound. Sir, bear
with me.

TAV.—Keep but soft speech. Nay,
pray you let me go.

Open the door; I should be hence in time.
[*The King of Navarre passes over the stage.*]

CA.—Good night, lord marshal. You
come late, fair sir,

To bear my daughter commendations.

I doubt she looks for you; I have had
pains

To bring her safe and presently your way;
She had some will to watch.

HEN.—I am the more bound to you.

CA.—Let my praise sleep to-night,
unless you do

Speak well of me to her. See, the white
stars

Do burn upon the fair blue weather's
waste

Thick as the lulled wind carries the marred
leaves;

Yea, see how gray my likenesses are
grown,

That grow on my gray years!

HEN.—Madam, good night.

[*Exit.*]

CA.—That gives one heart; and yet I
seem to choke,

I shall feel weak till I do hear them shoot.
Pray you take order that the watch be
sharp.

Upon this boy.

TAV.—

I shall take order.

CA.—

Yea,

But go with me till I have seen the king.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. *A Street.*

Enter GUISE with Soldiers.

GUI.—Keep in, let no man slip across
of you;

Hold well together; what face I miss of
nine

Shall not see food to-morrow; but he that
makes

So dull a mixture of his soul with shame
As spare the gold hair or the white, shall
be

Dead flesh this hour. Take iron to your
hands,

Fire to your wills; let not the runagate
love

Fool your great office; be pity as a stone
Spurned either side the way. That breast
of woman

That suckles treason with false milk and
breeds

Poison i' the child's own lip, think not
your mother's

Nor that lank chin which the gray season
shakes

Hold competent of reverence. Pluck me
that corn

Which alters in the yellow time of man;
And the sick blade of ungrown days dis-
root,

The seed makes rot the flower: There's no
such use

But reason turns to holy, and keen right
Washes as pure as faith; therefore be swift,
and let

Cold mercy choke on alms.

A CAPTAIN.— We shall not fail.

GUI.—Some ten go with me to the ad-
miral's house;

You shall be one,—and you; pluck him
from bed,

And use his body as your edges please,
Then hale him through the street. The
rest of you,

As you see time, fire either way; then draw

And strike across the thickest ends of flight,
God helping you. Say "Guise" now and
set on. [Exeunt.

SCENE V. *The Admiral's House.*

Enter COLIGNY and LA NOUE.

LA N.—That this is true we have clean
proofs; she hath made us
Pawns of her game; this very France of
ours

Is as a cloth to wipe her feet upon,
Her bed and stool of lust; and hath put on
The naked patience of a beaten face
And sufferance of a whore.

Co.— I think so. Sir,
I have believed this marriage of Navarre
Began our waste.

LA N.—That stings me not so hard
As that men mix us in their mouths with
fools

Who are not worth our slight esteem of
them,

And yet have sewn religion on their sleeve
And badged their caps with us.

Co.— They have done more harm;
There is no lean or lesser villainy
That war or peace-time saddles them
withal.

But it must be our blame, the fault of it
Throws dirt on us and each man's several
hand

That wets no finger in the Catholic way;
That bites the nearest.

LA N.— We are imperilled; well;
Danger should be the coat across my back,
Meat in my lips, if I saw clear and good
The choice and shape of our necessity;
But here to blunder the chance out,—my
lord,

No help for us then here?

Co.— I see no help.
Nay too, I bind not all the weight on
them;

In me and you the plague is well at work
That rots all chances. We have let go the
times

That came with gold in the hands; and
that slow snake,

Impotent patience of pernicious things,
Hath won upon us, and blown murderous
breath

Between the wide nuwarded lips of sleep.
Come, talk no more. Is the night fair?
methinks

I heard some humming rumors run through
it.

LA N.—Sir, fair enough; there goes a
little wind

Among the roofs, but slow as a maimed
man;

The skies burn sharp with point of the lit
stars,

Even to the larger cope of all there is
No air but smooth.

Co.— 'Tis a good night for sleep;
Fair time to you.

LA N.— I pray God set such peace
Upon the seasonable eyes of sleep
As may well comfort you. Dear lord, good
night. [Exit.

Co.—Farewell.—Now might I put lean
patience in my prayers

If I should pray to-night; I have no will
To leave my witness against men and pray
That God would suffer them. Surety I
think he bears

Somewhat too much with such side-work-ing
sins

As lame the laboring hope of men, and
make

Endurance a blind sort of sleepy lie
To confute God with. This woman here
grows old,

As I am old; we have drawn this way and
that

So long, the purpose lessens from the
doing,

Turns to a very function of the flesh
So used for custom. She carries France
her way,

And my way breaks. Then if one sees the
end,

The goal that shuts the roadway sheer
across,

The builded limit of a complete will,
All these side-briers and puddled rain-
shallows

That rend or drench us, are but naught
thereto,

Well, here I tire for one, and fain would
use

This winter of bleached hair and fallen
flesh

To make me quiet room,—Shut up the
house;

Let nothing wake the windows.—I will to
bed,—

The wind gets thick indeed. What noise
is there? [Firing outside.

Get me a light.

GUI.—(*Within.*)—Nay, but get you first in;

Throw the knave out at window.

CO.— Yea, my Guise?

Then are the sickles in this corn, I doubt.

GUI.—(*Within.*)—This way men, this!
CO.— Not so; the right hand, sirs.

SCENE VI.—*Outside the Louvre.*

Enter DENISE.

DEN.—I cannot find a man; the cries are thick;

I came too late. Alas, I fear the king
Hath put the order forward; I may see him
And so prevent some peril; and though
they slay me,

I die of my misdoing. Yet I fear death
Most piteously, wear passion on my cheek
White as a coward's. I'll yet forth and
look;

For in the temper of this bloody time
Must sleep my help or end; I may discover
him

And that may be some grace; now God be
good,

Or I am so far bruised this way, as death
Can bite no sharper. [*Exit.*]

SCENE VII. *A Balcony of the Louvre,*

Enter many Ladies.

1 LA.—Did you not see him?

2 LA.— Give me place, place, place;
I have the news.

3 LA.— Not you; I can say more.

2 LA.—How your sides push! let me
get breath—O Mary!

I have seen such things—

4 LA.— As should wear silence.

2 LA.— Nay,

For they felt sweet.

3 LA.—See, there goes one,—and there;
O well run, you! now trip him,—'ware
stones, ho!

Or you may catch a bruise.

1 LA.— Now he is down.

5 LA.—Not so; you have no eyes.

3 LA.— Had I a bow,

I would take four myself. Look, look, a
chase!

O, now you thrust.

4 LA.—Way, sirs! make way for him!

5 LA.—There's a child slain; I will not
look that side;

They thrust him in the back.

2 LA.— Go and sew threads;

Go sew; you are a fool.

1 LA.—Who has that side?

4 LA.—Do him no hurt, sirs; yea, the
the point now, yea,

Not the edge,—look you! just the nape
across,—

Down with him, there!

3 LA.— Is the old man yet slain?

2 LA.—Ay, by the Guise, they took him
in his bed,
Just in a fumbled sheet.

1 LA. No, he was risen.

Enter RENÉE.

RENÉE.—Why are you here? next room
serves best for show:

There they have drawn to head, that all the
street

Swells up and cries; Soubise and Marsillac
Hold off their pikes.

4 LA.—Show us the way to that.

RENÉE.—This way—I pray, you hurt
me not,—this way;

Do not push close. God's love, what heat
is here! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VIII. *The Streets.*

Enter GUISE, TAVANNES, with Soldiers;
MARSILLAC, SOUBISE, PARDAILLAN,
and others confusedly.

SOL.—Guise, Guise! down with them!
for the king, the king!

Guise, Guise!

1 SOL.—Here, dog, take this to choke
upon.

MAR.—Sirs, stand by me; hew down
that knave at right,

I pray you, sir. Nay, we shall spoil them
yet;

Stand but a little fast.

A HUGUENOT.— Mercy! God help!

TAV.—Thrust me a steel nail in that
tongue and throat;

So, sir; prate now as you do love such nails.
Set on; this August serves for reaping time

Bleed the plague out with your incisions.

MAR.—Guise, if thou hast a man's mark
left on thee,

Do me this right. I thank you, sir, the
office

Spares me some work.

GUI.—Stand to me. men; down with
him!

My heel hath rent a better face to-night.

TAV.—Kill me this scapegate harlot in her smock,
The child to water. Charge their face again;
Make a clean way and we shall smite them all.

PAR.—Yea, devil's dog, wilt only snarl at me?
Prithee, but room to die in and take breath,
One stifles this way stupidly,—ah! beasts!

[Dies.
TAV.—(*Crossing Soubise*.)—Ah thing,
what set thee on such work to do?
Die, fragment, and turn carrion fit for use.
[Stabs him.

There's not a man the less.

SOL.—Tavannes! Tavannes!

OTHERS.—Guise, Guise! upon them for the king, the king! [Exeunt.

SCENE IX. *The Louvre.*

The Queen-Mother, YOLANDE, MARGARET, Duchess of Lorraine, and Attendants.

CA.—Where is the king?

YOL.—Madam, gone forth I think.

CA.—Are you whole yet? you look half slain with fear;

Quiet yourself.

MAR.—You know what I saw.

No, not your hand; let me sit here.

CA.—Yea, sit.—

O, are you there?

YOL.—Madam, it is no fault

To say she is escaped.

CA.—No fault!

What, have you let her go? how came she out?

YOL.—Do your best will with me; I will speak truth.

CA.—How came she forth? you are a worthy guard,—

Do, as you love the better chance of time.
I have a will to smite you by the cheek;
Answer to that.

YOL.—By heaven I speak all pure;
By heaven I do; she had the key of me.

CA.—Do not you mock; I may turn sharp with you.

YOL.—Alas, I do not; she put force on me

To let her forth; I could not please you;
do not

Lay your great wrath my way.

CA.—O fool,—fool,—fool!

Were you so much compassionate of her?
I was bewitched to give you such a charge.
Where is she now? speak still.

YOL.—I have not seen.

CA.—If these be lies I'll find a bitter way,—

I'll do,—I have no time to think of it,
But I'll make shame as wide as your desert

To show your penitence. Find me this girl,

Or punishment shall reach beyond your deed,

Put pity out of service. Look for her;

Bring her to me; if I so miss her,—Go.

[Exit YOLANDE.

How does my daughter?

DUCH.—Madam, well by this.

MAR.—But shaken to the brain.

CA.—Poor child; what cause?

MAR.—I was unclothed for sleep, heavy at eyes,

And fit for my bed's heat, when thus at point

There comes a cry and beating of two hands

Hard at my door; then snaps the hinge from it,

And a man comes, smeared shamefully and red

With a new wound i' the side; flings him on me,

Plucks me half slain with fear across the bed,

Cries for some pity, hales me by the hand,
And so clings hard; when my great fear got strength

To wellnigh wrench me clear and throw off him,

Begins such piteous prayer and puts rebuke

To such a tune, so bitter, I did even
Make mercy wet with tears; whereon (as peril

Would outgrow its own face and turn like death,

Doubling my fear) the soldiers after him,
Some three or four, flecked murderously with blood,

All weaponed for their work, and crying out,

Broke in on us; he twisting with sore fright
Obscures himself with me; and thus in doubt

He shuffled this side death; for as they bore on him

Still holding to me, comes their captain in,
Chides the knave off that had a hand on us,

And plucks him loose; then with mixt laughter did

Swear the man safe; he could not choose but laugh

To see me harried so, so haled and drawn,
Nor I to see him laugh; and so our laughter

Got off my friend.

Enter the King with an arquebuse and TAVANNES.

CH.— O, are you here? I have
Some three—some six—by God I have
some six

Already to my share.

CA.—(*To Tav.*)— Sir, what is this?

TAV.—The king has slain some six of
them, he says;

I saw him shoot indeed.

CH.— Ay, did I not?
Hear you, he says I did; hear him a little.
One—two—see, I can take them either
hand,

The place is wide.

TAV.— Here, by this balcony;
I saw him shoot myself.

CA.— How goes the work?

TAV.—Even like a wave that turns; the
thing opposed

Is as the weed it rends at root away,
Dies ere the touch for fear.

CA.— It is well done.

TAV.—The king did summon me to
speak with; there

I left them midways. Are you yet
abashed?

I think it smirches you with half a red,
This pity; are you nothing plagued with
it?

CA.—Not I a jot; I would all such i' the
world

Were here to be so rid.

Re-enter YOLANDE.

Now? have you her?

YOL.—She has been seen to-night; one
found her late

Ranging the rooms and passage of the
court

Like one distempered; now catching at this
man

To pray him pity her, crying on him
To let her go; or poring in side ways
To follow up their feet, as she would trace
The consequence and graft of peril through
To know it thoroughly.

CA.— This doth approve it like
That she is fled; where should she hide
herself?

YOL.—Madam, the main half your ladies
are

Gone forth to gaze upon this slaughter.

CA.— Ay!
May she be there? Lord marshal, have
you seen

These ladies that she talks of?

TAV.— Madam, I have;
They were about the windows next the
street

Searching each side with large and curious
eyes;

I saw some twenty with sweet laughing
mouths

And hair wherein the flame of lights did
make

New colors red as blood, gathered upon
A corpse I slew myself, with fleers and
gibes

Abusing the blind thing; it made me
merry

To hear how they did mock the make
of it,

As blood were grown their game.

CA.— The king is sad;
I have a word like mercy in my mind,
But it doth wound itself; I see no use
That sorrow fails not in, where things are
done

That will not be wept out.

TAV.— 'T is a strange night;
But not to me displeasing; I esteem
Our service wholesome. I will not forth
again,

For I have watched into a weariness.

CA.—How does our son?

CH.— I think some runagates be
Yet by this passage. Give me that again;
I'll score them too. Nay, if one wet his
knees,

Best over ears and all.

[*Exit.*

CA.— They are too far to hit;
I'll wager them safe out. What do you
see?

TAV.—They have escaped the points o' the
guard; I doubt
He will not bear it so.

YoL.— O, that way—there—
Can you make out ? a woman as I think—

CA.—Some poor man's wife; I would
she might get safe.

TAV.—See, the king thrusts out far; 'tis
a brave king;

Look how his bowing body crooks itself
After the aim.

CA.— Ten pieces to a doit
The issue scars not her.

TAV.— I take you, madam.
The king comes back.

Re-enter King.

CA.— Have I waged wrong on you ?

CH.—I have slain seven. Mother, I
could begin
To sicken of this way.

CA.— What way, fair son ?

CH.—I did not think the blood should
run so far.

There was a woman I saw lately slain,
And she was ript 'i the side: at point
to die,

She threw her on her child and there came
one

Who clove it by the throat. Then I grew
sick

And my head seemed to change as if the
stroke

Had dulled it through the bone; the sense
of that

Still aches in me.

CA.— Set your thought otherwise.

CH.—Why so I do; and cannot choose
but think

How many that rose fresh with wholesome
thoughts

And with my credit washed their faiths in
me

Do sleep now bloodily.

CA.— You hurt yourself

To lay repentance on such deeds as are
Necessity's mere proof. Put this away:

And tell yourself how many dead in war
Gave battle welcome and their time went
out

Even in the wording of it; and but for this
(Though I confess the sense feels sick on it)
We should have had worse wars.

CH.— I think we might.

CA.—Bethink you too, what stings us in
the seeing

It is no new infection of the world
Corrupting all its usual office, or

The common blood of it, with some strange
sore,

More gross being new; such things have
have chanced ere this,

Yea, many thousand times have men put
hand

To a worse business, and given hire to
death

To captain them i' the field and play their
man,

Used him with fellowship. Who knows,
sweet son,

But here, and in this very Paris, where
Our work now smells abhorred, some such
may come

To try more bloody issues, and break faith
More shamefully? make truth deny its
face,

Kill honor with his lips; stab shame to
death,

Unseat men's thoughts, envenom all belief,
Yea, spit into the face and eyes of God

His forsworn promise? Such things may
be; for time,

That is the patient ground of all men's
seed

And ripens either corn alike, may bring
Deeds forth which shall as far outreach
our act

As this doth common things; and so they
wear

The clothes and cover of prosperity,
Those tongues where blame of us yet sticks
shall put

Applause on them.

CH.— It may be you say true:
I would believe you with a perfect will.

*Enter RENÉE, ANNE, and others, with
DENISE.*

CA.—What is this business? quick—
CH.— O now, now, now—

This is the very matter of my thought
That was a ghost before; this is the flesh,

The bone and blood of that my thin
surmise,

Palpably shaping fear. I will not see her.
CH.—How fell this out? you, speak.

RENÉE.— We found her so—
Wounded I think to death.

ANNE.— She hath besought us
To bring her to this presence.

CA.— Can she speak still?
ANNE.—Yea, and speak straight; I
would not pawn my word

This touch were deadly to her.

RENÉE.— I say it is;
She has a wound i' the side.

CA.— Set her down gently:
She will do well; deal softly with her;
good:

Be heedful of your hands. So; look to
her.

DEN.—I thank you, madam; let me sit
a little.

MAR.—Give her some wine.

DEN.— Sir, are not you the king?
He was grown kind; let them not slay me
then,

I'll swear you are no less. I think I am
hurt;

Let me speak to you; my side hurts indeed.

CH.—Nay, if hell comes in sleep, then
hell itself

Is like the face of a dream. Eh? this
were quaint,

To find such hell at last.

DEN.— I thank you too;
For I am well, so near the heart of quiet,
The most hushed inward of obscured peace,
I feel my spirit a light thing and sweet,
Evened with what it was.

CA.— Hath she a hurt indeed?

YOL.—Yea, the right side; she holds her
gown on it.

CA.—I did believe this was the stab of
fear.

Get her away.—My son, remove your arms.
Some one fetch help; but not too quickly,
mark,

[*Aside to YOLANDE, who goes out.*
Lest speed undo itself.—Release her, sir.

DEN.—No, let him hold me safe; your
hand that side,

I shall breathe better. Do they still slay?
Alas,

It is a night shall mark you red forever
I' the honest eyes of men.

Cv.— Will she talk now?

CH.—How came this hurt on you?

CA.— Make that no question.

CH.—Will you teach me? Here, sweet,
this way; you know

I always loved you.—Give us room; she
will

Get present breath.

DEN.— It was a window shot,—
A side-shot striking by the wall; O God!
It pains me sore: but ease me with your
arm.

CH.—Is God fallen old at once, that he
is blind

And slays me not? I am beneath all hell,
Even past the limit and conceit of reach
Where fire might catch on me. Why, I
have slain

The chiefest pearl o' the world, the perfect
rule

To measure all sweet things; now even to
unseat God

Were a slight work.

DEN.— Was it your aim indeed?

CH.—O no, no aim. Get me some
help; all you

That gape and shiver on this act enstaged,
You are all parts of murder.

CA.— Sir, be patient;

This cross is not your sin.—He heeds us
not:

Do not speak to him.

CH.— Is she yet warm? I'll give
That man that will but put an hour in her
My better part of kingdom. Nay, look up;
This breath that I do speak to thee withal
Shall be the medicine to restore thine own
Though I spend all. Sweet, answer me;
I'll make thee

Queen of my present power and all that
earth

Which hangs upon it.

DEN.— Disquiet not yourself;
I do not chide you: nay, I know too, sir,
You never hated me: nor did I ever
Make such a fault as should have plucked
me thus

Into your hate or stroke. I am dead indeed;
And in this flesh hath God so scourged
your act

As I now bleed for it; so I do think
That from this time his adverse hand will
not

Push your loss further.

MAR.— This is a bitter sight.

CA.—A pitiful; but come you not into't;
You have no part.

DEN.— I tax you not for it.

I have good hope that you have done herein
Mere blind man's work, not put upon your
hands

Murder's own wear; which ministry of
yours

God punishes in me. Too much of that.
Do not you yet for this my foolish sake
Make dull your better seasons; let remorse,
If such will bite, feed otherwise than here;

For me, indeed I leave no blur of it
To blot your love at all. For my grace
given

Give me grace back; change mercy with
me, for

I have wronged you too. In this large
world, dear lord,

I have so little space I need use time
With most scant thrift; yet that my love
holds out

Let me catch breath to say. No, stir not
yet;

Be but two minutes patient of me; keep
Your arm more straight. Say I have slain
myself

And the thought clears you; be not moved
thereat;

For though I slew a something that you
loved

I did it lovingly. [Dies.

CA.— Ay, there it breaks:
I am sorry for her, she was fair enough.
Does she not breathe?

CH.— No whit; the lips are dull.
Now could I rail God out of pity, change
The blessed heaven with words; yea, move
sphered souls

Into a care of me; but I'll say nothing:
No reason stands I should say anything,

Who have this red upon my soul. Yea,
dead?

She is all white to the dead hair, who was
So full of gracious rose the air took color,
Turned to a kiss against her face. Sirs,
help;

I would fain have her hence; I am bound
to you;

Sirs, hurt her not to touch her side; yea, so.

[Exit, with some bearing out the body.

CA.—(To Tav.)—Come hither, sir; as
you respect my grace,

Lay your good care on him, that in waste
words

His mood gall not himself. For this girl
slain,

Her funeral privacy of rite shall be
Our personal care through her deserts
were such

As crave no large observance, yet our pity
Shall almost cover the default in them
With all smooth grace that grace may do to
her.

You to my son, and you this way with me;
The weight of this harsh dawn doth bruise
my sense,

That I am sick for sleep. Have care of
him.



ROSAMOND.

I. *The Maze at Woodstock.*

ROSAMOND, CONSTANCE.

Constance.

TAKE not such thought of it.
Ros.— Nay, I take none.
They cannot put me out of love so much
As to take thought for them; yet I am hurt

And my sense wrung at this a little. See,
If six leaves make a rose, I stay red yet
And the wind nothing ruins me; who says

I am at waste?—Look, since last night!—
for me,

I care not though you get through all they
said.

All this side dashed with fits of weeping
time,

See you, the red struck out; an evil year.
If such times vex me till no sleep feels
good,

It is not that I think of such lewd words
With wine still hot in them. Who calls it
spring?

Simply this winter plays at red and green.
Clean white no color for me, did they
say?

I never loved white roses much; but see
How the wind drenches the low lime-
branches

With shaken silver in the rainiest leaves.
Mere winter, winter. I will love you
well,

Sweet Constance, do but say I am not
fair,

No need for patience if I be not fair,
For if men really lie to call me fair
He need not come; I pray God keep him
close

For fear he come and see I am not fair.
Can you not speak, not say if this be true,

That I may cease? come, am I fair or no?
Speak your pure mind.

CONST.— Nay, madam, for you know
Doubtless it was delight to make your
face

And rippled soft miraculous gold hair
Over the touched veins of most tender
brows

Meant for men's lips to make them glad of
God

Who gives them such to kiss.

Ros.— Leave off my praise,
It frets me flesh and all as sickness doth
Till the blood wanes; yea, and quaint news
to hear,

That I am fair, have hair strung through
with gold,

Smooth feet, smooth hands, and eyes worth
pain to see!

Why once the king spake of my hair like
this,

“As though rain filled and stained a tress
of corn

Loose i' the last sheaf of many slackened
sheaves;

Or if” (ay, thus) “one blew the yellow
dust

That speckles a red lily off both cheeks
Held in the sun, so if in kissing her

I let the wind into her hair, it blows
Thin gold back, shows the redder thread

of it.
Burnt saffron-scented;” some faint rhyme
of his

Tuned brown and colored after his French
wise.

CONST.—You learnt such sonnets of
him?—A man's step,—

Ah, that girl's binding the wet tendrils
there

Last night blew over.

Ros.— See, at my hands end,

Those apple-flowers beaten on a heap,
So has the heavy weather trod on them.
There are my rhymes all spoilt and blown
with wind,
Broken like birds' wings blown against a
wall.

Girl, do you know I lived so quiet once,
Leaning whole days in a warmed side-win-
dow
With the chin cushioned up and soft vague
feet

Thrust out to sleep, and warm sides
couched for ease
Full of soft blood, pulsed slow with happi-
ness

Such fair green seasons through, with
dreams that lay
Most blossom-soft between the lids,—and
lovè

A little way I thought above my brows,
His finger touching them; yea, for whole
months

I was so patient to serve time and have
Love's mouth at last set suddenly on mine;
Abode and heard the blood that grew in
me

More sweet, and the days' motion in my
ears
Touched audibly.

CONST.— This was a gracious time.

ROS.—One song you have, I pray but
sing me that,
I taught it you; and yet I like it not;
Trouverres have sweet lips with a bitter
heart,

And such a gracious liar, I doubt, wrote
this;

But sing it; it shall do no harm to hear.

CON.—Sweet, for God's love, I bid you
kiss right close

On mouth and cheek, because
you see my rose

Has died that got no kisses
of the rain;

So will I sing to sweeten my
sweet mouth,

So will I braid my thickest hair
to smooth,

And then,—I need not call
you love again.

I like it well enough.

ROS.— The sick sweet in it
Taints my mouth through.—Could the heat
make me sleep!

My feet ache like my head. Doth this I say

Tire you so hard you cannot answer me?

CONST.—Madam, I would my words
were wine to drink

That might heal all your better sense and
blood;

But some hurts ache in the bone past oil
and wine,

And I do think the words I heard of you
Burn you thus hot only with hate of shame.

ROS.—Shame? who said shame? am I
so sick of love

That shame can hurt me? there's no shame
in the world

Whose wound would hurt more than too
hard a kiss

If love kept by the face of blinking shame
To kill the pain with patience. Am I his
wife

That it should fret me to be trod by
shame?

Ah, child, I know that were my lord at
right

And shame stood on this left with eager
mouth

For some preparèd scorn,—I could but
turn

Saying,—lo, here this hand to cover me,
Lo, this to plait my hair and warm my
lips;

I could well pity thee, dull snake, poor
fool,

Faint shame, too feeble to discredit me.

CONST.—I would I had never come
hither.

ROS.— Are you tired?

But I seem shameful to you, shamerworthy,
Contemnable of good women, being so
bad,

So bad as I am. Yea, would God, would
God,

I had kept my face from this contempt of
yours.

Insolent custom would not anger me
So as you do; more clean are you than I,
Sweeter for gathering of the grace of God
To perfume some accomplished work in
heaven?

I do not use to scorn, stay pure of hate,
Seeing how myself am scorned unworthily;
But anger here so takes me in the throat
I would speak now for fear it strangle me.
Here, let me feel your hair and hands and
face;

I see not flesh is holier than flesh,
Or blood than blood more choicely qualified

That scorn should live between them.
Better am I

Than many women; you are not over fair,
Nor delicate with some exceeding good
In the sweet flesh; you have no much
tenderer soul

Than love is moulded out of for God's use
Who wrought our double need; you are not
so choice

That in the golden kingdom of your eyes
All coins should melt for service. But I
that am

Part of the perfect witness for the world
How good it is; I chosen in God's eyes
To fill the lean account of under men,
The lank and hunger-bitten ugliness
Of half his people; I who make fair heads
Bow, saying, "Though we be in no wise
fair

We have touched all beauty with our eyes,
we have

Some relish in the hand, and in the lips
Some breath of it," because they saw me
once;

I whose curled hair was as a strong staked
net

To take the hunters and the hunt, and
bind

Faces and feet and hands; a golden gin
Wherein the tawny-lidded lions fell,
Broken at ankle; I that am yet, ah yet,
And shall be till the worm hath share in
me,

Fairer than love or the clean truth of God,
More sweet than sober customs of kind use
That shackle pain and stablsh temperance;
I that have roses in my name, and make
All flowers glad to set their color by;
I that have held a land between twin lips
And turned large England to a little kiss;
God thinks not of me as contemptible,
And that you think me even a smaller
thing

Than your own goodness and slight name
of good,

Your special, thin, particular repute;
I would some mean could be but clear to
me

Not to condemn you.

CONST.— Madam, I pray you think
I had no will to whet you to such edge;
I might wish merely to be clear of pain
Such as I have to see you weep,—to see
That wasp contempt feed on your colored
rind

Whose kernel is so spiced with change of
sweet;

No more, I swear to you by God no more.

ROS.—I will believe you. But speak
truly now

As you are fair, I say you are fair too,
Would you be wiser than I was with him?
A king to kiss the maiden from your lips,
Fill you with fire as water fills the sea,
Hands in your hair and eyes against your
face,—

Ay, more than this, this need not strike at
heart,

But say that love had bound you like a dog,
Leashed your loose thoughts to his uncertain
feet,

Then would you be much better than such
are

As leave their soul upon two alien lips
Like a chance word of talk they use for
breath?

O girl, that hast no bitter touch of love,
No more assurance of it than report
Flaunts in the teeth of blame,—I bid you
know

Love is much wiser than we twain, more
strong

Than men who hold the pard by throat and
jaw.

Love's signet-brand stamps through the
gold o' the years,

Severs the gross and chastens out the
mould.

God has no plague so perilous as love,
And no such honey for the lips of Christ
To purge them clean of gall and sweet for
heaven.

It was to fit the naked limbs of love
He wrought and clothed the world with
ordnance.

Yea, let no wiser woman hear me say
I think that whoso shall unclithe his soul
Of all soft raiment colored custom weaves,
And choose before the cushion-work of
looms

Stones rough at edge to stab the tender
side,

Put honor off and patience and respect
And veils and relics of remote esteem
To turn quite bare into large arms of love,
God loves him better than those bitter fools
Whom ignorance makes clean; and blood-
less use

Keeps colder than their dreams.

CONST.— It may be true,

I know not; only to stay maiden-souled
Seems worthier to me.

ROS.— Doth it so? Ah you
That tie the spirit closer to the flesh
To keep both sweet, it seems again to me
You kill the gracious secret of it, and mar
The wholesome heaven with scent of ruined
things

That breed mere flies for issue. Ay, and
love

That makes the daily flesh an altar-cup
To carry tears and rarest blood within
And touch pained lips with feast of sacra-
ment,—

So sweet it is, God made it sweet! Poor
words,

Dull words, I have compassion on them,
girl,

Their babble falls so far this side of love
Significance faints in them. This I know,
When first I had his arms across my head
And had his mouth upon my heated hair
And his sharp kisses mixed into my blood,
I hung athirst between his hands, and said,
Sweet, and so sweet! for both mine eyes
were weak,

Possessed with rigorous prophecy of tears
To drench the lids past sleeping, and both
lips

Stark as twain rims of a sweet cup drunk
out.

CONST.—My first word serves me here;
this may be true.

ROS.—Say this, you have a tender wo-
man's face,

Do you love children? does it touch your
blood

To see God's word finished in a child's
face

For us to touch and handle? seems it sweet
To have such things in the world to hold
and kiss?

CONST.—Yea, surely.

ROS.—Yea? then be most sure of this,
Love doth so well surpass and foil the
sense

That makes us pleasure out of children
seen,

That I being severed from the lips of mine
Feel never insufficient sight, or loss
Of the sweet natural aim or use in eyes
Because they are not; but for only this;
That seldom in grave passages of time
Such gracious red possesses the full day
As leaves me light to look into his face

Who made me children.

CONST.— Doth he love you as well?
Then two such loves were never wrought in
flesh

Since the sun moved.

ROS.— Ah girl, you fail fair truth;
He doth love me, would let me take his
name

To soil, his face to set my feet upon;
But love is no such new device we need
Boast over that. Nay, are you dull indeed?
All stories are so lined and sewn with love,
Ravel that gold and brodered thread in
them,

You rend across the mid and very seam.
Yea, I am found the woman in all tales,
The face caught always in the story's face,
I Helen, holding Paris by the lips,
Smote Hector through the head; I Cressida
So kissed men's mouths that they went sick
or mad,

Stung right at brain with me; I Guenivere
Made my queen's eyes so precious and my
hair

Delicate with such gold in its soft ways
And my mouth honeyed so for Launcelot,
Out of good things he chose his golden soul
To be the pearlwork of my treasuring
hands,

And so our love foiled God; I that was
these

And am no sweeter now than Rosamond
With most full heart and mirth give my
lord up

Body's due breath and soul's forefashioned
peace

To pay love with; what should I do but
this

That am so loved? Ay, you might catch
me here

Saying his French wife smites my love
across

With soft strange lips; yea, I know too she
may

Pluck skirts of afterthought, kiss pity's
feet,

Marry remembrance with a broken ring;
No time so famished, no such idle place
As spares her room next his; a wife, his
wife,—

If I be no king's wife, prithee what need
That she should steal the word to dress her
name

That suits my name as well? take love,
take all;

What shall keep hunger from the word of wife?

What praise, if reputation wear thin shoes,
Shall keep the rain from honored women's feet?

Wife, wife,—I get no music out of wife;
I see no reason between me and wife
But what breath mars with making; yea,
poor fool,
She gets the harsh bran of my corn to eat.

CONST.—Men call the queen an adder underfoot,
Dangerous obedience in the trodden head;
I pray you heed your feet in walking here.

ROS.—Fear is a cushion for the feet of love,
Painted with colors for his ease-taking;
Sweet red, and white with wasted blood,
and blue
Most flower-like, and the summer-spoused green
And sea-betrothed soft purple and burnt black.

All colored forms of fear, omen and change,
Sick prophecy and rumors lame at heel,
Anticipations and astrologies,
Perilous inscription and recorded note,
All these are covered in the skirt of love
And when he shakes it these are tumbled forth,
Beaten and blown i' the dusty face of the air.

Were she ten queens and every queen his wife,
I could not find out fear. Where shame is hid
I can but guess when patience leaves me sick;

But where the lank bat fear is huddled in
Doth no conjecture smell.

CONST.— Mine holds yet out,
Seeing the queen is reconciled: their son
Ties peace between both hands; she will do much

To move him from his care set over you.

ROS.—I care not; let her bind him heel to head,

So she may keep him, clip and kiss him so.
For me, I will go in; no doubt he shall
Be here to-night; I were best sleep till then

And have the sweet of sleep about my face

To touch his senses with; for he shall come,

I have no doubt of him but he shall come.
Kiss me yet, sweet, I would not anger you.
[Exit.

CONST.—Yea, I taste through this way of yours; so fair

Her sin may serve as well as holy ways.
Shall not it so? Let the queen make some tale,

A silk cluc taken in the king's spur's gold,
No fear lest I be taken; and what harm
To catch her feet i' the dragnets of her sin
That is so full of words, eats wicked bread,
Shares portion with shame's large and common cups,

Feeds at lewd tables, girds loose garments on?

For all this brave breath wasted out of heart,

I doubt this frets her; verily I think
Some such pain only makes her gibe at me
Fair fool, with her soft shameful mouth!
at least

I keep clean hands to do God's offices
And serve him with my noose upon her neck.
[Exit.

II. *The Palace at Shene.*

QUEEN ELEANOR and ROBERT DE BOUCHARD.

Queen Eleanor.

YEA, true for such; but he and I were old

Already; though men say his hair keeps black,

Ay, black-bright hair, touched deep as poppies' black

They cover up in scarlet; that's my lord;
Sweet color, with a thought of black at heart.

Some flowers they say, if one pluck deep enough,

Bleed as you gather.

BOUCH.— That means love, I think:
You gather it and there's the blood at root.

QU. EL.—How much, my Bouchard?
let your beard alone;

You could well strike me, I believe at heart;

God help me that am troubled with you so;
Feel both hands now; the blood's alive there, beats

And flutters in the fingers and the palms.

BOUCH.—True, hot enough; what will you do? the king

Comes back to take farewell and hold his way

With some thin train that gathers London-wards;

Thence ere he take ship shall my lord make way

Among the westward alder-meadows, thrust
Between soft Godstow poplars and warm grass

Right into Woodstock and pleached rose-places;

Shall the queen follow lest he lack a face
For welcome, and sweet words to kiss i' the lip?

I would go with you lest some harm should fall.

QU. EL.—No need, for would God let them hurt me? Well,

I would fain see the rose grow, Robert.

BOUCH.— Being fair,

A woman is worth pains to see.

QU. EL.— Being fair.

Sweet stature hath she and fair eyes, men say;

I am but black, with hair that keeps the braid,

And my face hurt and bitten of the sun
Past medicine of all waters; so his tooth
Bites hard in France, and strikes the brown grape hot

Makes the wine leap, no skin-room spares for white,—

I know well now; the woman has that white,

His water-weed, his golden girl-flower
With lank sapped stem and green rind moist at core.

Ay, gold! but no crown's gold to all this hair,

That's hard, my Robert.

BOUCH.— See how men will lie;
They call you hard, this people, sour to bite;

Now I will trust your sweetness, do but say
You will not touch her if I get you through.

QU. EL.—I will not hurt her, Bouchard;
for God's love,

Help me; I swear by God I will not hurt,
I will not—Ah, sweet Robert, bear me through,

Do not make smiles and never move your mouth:

When we ride back I will do anything.

Wear man's dress, take your horse to water,—yea,

Kiss clean your feet of any travelling dust,—

Yea, what your page has never done I will
For mere love, Robert, for pure love of you;

Nay, if I meant to stab or poison her,
You might so chide me, Bouchard, bid me back,

Not now! I will not hurt her; there again.

Kiss me! I love you as a man loves God.
Be sorry for me!

BOUCH.—Ah well, well; no doubt
But my Lord wrought me with a tender hand,

Spoiled half a man in making; there, sit, sit.

I felt your teeth come through that bitter kiss.

Sit now and talk; it is my service, madam,
A man's good service merely, nothing else,
To ride for you, to ride with you,—not more.

QU. EL.—I have some help yet of this Bouchard, then?

See now, sir, you are knight and gentle-man;

I pray you that your service fail not here.
For wears a man rich office and rich name
Nearer than wife about him? so the king
Wears me; and so I bid you serve him, sir,
I bid you? rather I take prayer to me

And catch your faith with prayer; right meek I am,

Chide with me, Bouchard, if I be not meek;

No child was ever so milk-mouthed, no bird

That picks out seed from scented and pink palms.

To say soft words is seasonable; and good
To think of all men smoothly; else a sin
May sting you suddenly—as him it stung—
Hell's heat burn through that whorish mouth of hers!

BOUCH.— Madam!

QU. EL.—And God that knows I weep!

BOUCH.— Keeps count
(The monks' song says it) of your flitting times,

Seals all your tears up safely, doth he not?
Hark, there's one singing.

QU. EL.— But no monk this time.
Look, in the garden by the red wall's turn,

The king's fool under covert, and steals fruit;
Pluck such raw pears and spoil so bad a song,
That breaks my patience; a lewd witch-burden !

One sings outside :—

This was written in God's name;
The Devil kissed me
Mouth on mouth with little shame
Under a big tree.
He fed me full with good meat,
The best there might be;
He gave me black wine and sweet
Red fruit and honey-meal to eat;

Domine, laudamus te.

He made straight the lame
And fat he made me;
So he gat good game,
Kisses three by three.
He was shapen like a carl,
A swine's foot had he;
Like a dog's his mouth did snarl,
His hands were foul with loam and marl.

Domine, laudamus te.

QU. EL.—Eh, what lewd words so mutter in his teeth?
I hear no good ones; bid them see him whipped.

Outside :—

A bat came out of heaven
That had a flat snout;
A loaf withouten leaven,
Crums thereof fell out;
The Devil thrust up with his thumb,
Said tho to me,
Lo you, there shall be left no crumb
When I and you in heaven come;

Domine, laudamus te.

There were many leavés thick
Grown well over me;
A big branch of a little stick
In this greené tree;
He showed me brave things to wear,
Pleasant things to see;
A good game had we twain there,
The leavés weren broad and fair;

Domine, laudamus te.

QU. EL.—Bid the grooms whip him;
even a dog like that
Can be a fret to me, a thorn-prick. Ah,
Such beasts as feed about us, and we
make
Communion of their breath ! I am sick at
him.

Why, my sweet friend, I pray you of your
love

Do me some service.

BOUCH.—Nay, the fool's no harm;
Let be a little; service was your word?
See now, he creeps by nodding his fool's
head,

With back and shoulders rounded for the
sun;

Let the poor beast be; 't is no worse than
dogs

When the rain makes them howl, soaks to
the bone

As he is sodden through the wits of him.

Now, sweet, sit closer, talk with me; you
said

Service? what service must I do? the
king;

It's the king has me at his heels, a dog
For service; the best work one does for
love

As I do service for my Lord the king,

QU. EL.—Ay, for you love him; I have
learnt you, sir,

Can say my Bouchard through and turn the
leaf.

Are you his servant, lackey, chattel, purse,
The sheath where he's the hilt? you love
him; eh?

BOUCH.—Service and love make lord-
ship stable; well

Suppose I love him; there be such about
As would stoop shoulder and fit knee to
bear

Worse weight than I do, only for pure
love,—

Clean love, that washes out so much !

QU. EL.—Ah, sir,
They make you laugh, then?

BOUCH.—Well, not loud; a brush
That strikes one's lips with laughter as a fly
Touches a fruit and drops clean off, you
see.

Men love so, pay them wages (ah, not gold,
No gold of course, but credit, name, safe
room,

Broad space to sun the back and cram the
sides

And shake fat elbows and grow longer
beards,—

There's all one wants, now) pay them such,
I say—

Lo, sir, our friend hath never wrought for
that,

That he should take it; love holds other-
where

Than by the purfed corners of your sleeve,
Eats no such food as keeps your pages warm
Nor wears such raiment.

QU. EL.— Ay, my Bouchard, so ?
I've measure of you somewhere; why serve
me ?

Why sweat and crawl to get me such a
rose

And save my gloves one thorn ?

BOUCH.— Nay, I know not;
Find some clean reason for a miry foot
Or tell me why God makes the sun get up
Pricked out like a tame beast, I'll answer
you

Why I am pleased to be so serviceable.

But why our friend's lip tastes a sweet
therein

Who serves for honesty ? this were more
hard to say.

Still the truth stands, he'll work some
three good hours

Outside your hireling; yea, that's much for
him;

And all to get such dog's wage as a rag
To wrap some naked wound's unseemliness
Caught serving you, lest the sight turn your
blood

And swell your sick throat out at him.

QU. EL.— No more ?
I doubt you do belie both sides of love.

BOUCH.—But ask him rather; there's
Jean Becqueval,

King Louis has him throttled up in steel
That was a strong knight once, and had
broad bones

To get the mail shut over, not so tight.
A keen sword, madam, makes blunt work
in time,

For this man struck two blows for you or
three

Some years back, when your courtiers
snarled and spat;

Who might have children beat him on his
mouth

And could not shake about the chin for
spite

To save their plucking at his beard. Poor
fool,

I dare well say he hates you not the least,
Most like would bite now for you with his
teeth,

Since both hands could not pull the
scalbard straight;

Or loose the band o' the visor and not let
The steel snap on his fingers.

QU. EL.— If you say truth,
I swear by God's blood I am shamed
in it,

Shamed out of face; but I misdoubt you
lie

Your old hard way, lie perfectly. Be
good,

Say you did lie.

BOUCH.—I have said short of truth.

Nay, now you find this wound in him of
yours,

Should you fall weeping ? ask our lord so
much;

He'll swear by God's face, finger his own
beard,

And twist a hawk's foot round or hurt its
neck,

And say by God such things are pitiful.

Come, is your friend less pinched for his
good will ?

You know he would not, set things broadly
down,

Sweep this cast up and leave him room to
throw,

Change his soiled coat to be set clean in
gold;

He would just choose to serve you his best
way

Something beyond my warrant. Why, in
France

Last March the king's friend, Guerrat of
Sallières,

—A good knight,—has that long mouth
like a toad's,

And eats a woman like a grape with it,—
(Spits the husk out I mean and strains the
core)

Spake thus to me: "Sir Robert, there's a
man

Lies flat with rust upon his lips to chew

Who while your Queen touched Paris with
her feet

Would have plucked out his hairs for
cushion-stuff

To save her shoes a sprinkle of weak
rain,—

Burnt out his eyes a-sputter in the head
If she misliked their color."

QU. EL.— Not Sallières?

BOUCH.—It was my question; at which
word thrown out

His head went sideways as a big fish
flaps

And shoves with head and body, showing
white

I' the black oil of sea-water before storm
(You take such off-shore with sides wel-
tering)

And the cheeks got quick twinkles of eased
flesh

And the chin laughed: "By Mary's hand,"
he said,

"I think I would not."

QU. EL.— Ah, the fool he was!
Is he grown fat? he must be fat by this.

BOUCH.—I held to him; what name and
ways and work,

Where the man hid: whereat my Guerrat
rolls

And chatters,—“By the milk of Pilate's
nurse

And by the sleeve that wiped king Herod's
beard,

I hope the place be something worse than
hell,

Or I shall fare the worse next world, by
God!"

QU. EL.—What noise runs towards us?
is the king past Thames

Think you, by this?—Take this one word
of me;

Albeit I lay no heavy thought on it
Lest pain unmake me, hold this truth of
mine.

Sir Robert, which your swordsmen and
blank wits,

I doubt, would feel for half one's life and
miss:

I had sooner fare as doth this Becqueval
Than as I fare; yea, if a man will weep,

Let him weep here. God is no good to me,
Nor any man i' the world; I have no love

And no smooth hour in those twelve pricks
of plague

That smite my blood each once a day.
Nay, go;

Do me some greeting to my lord. Fare-
well. [*Exit* BOUCHARD.

I shall find time to hate you; yea, I do
Hate him past speech. Let me just cool

my head

And gather in some breath to face the king
I am quite stilled.

Enter King HENRY.

Fair days upon my lord.

K. HEN.—How does the queen?—Three
—not four provinces

To shut one's hand on.—Are you well?—
next month

My face at Paris, and his hands in mine
Touch service; two, three provinces at
most;

I must have more.

QU. EL.—I thank you, well enough.
How doth my Paris?—That means ill to
me,

That beat of his two fingers on the cheek.
Will Bouchard make no liar, does one
know?

K. HEN.—Fair news; our Louis to the
throat in steel,

And cannot clear his saddle at a leap,
But slips and sticks there as he did years

back,

Not in the saddle, but across a bed
His feet in time grew clear of and made

room.

QU. EL.—Made room for you to slide
between and thrust

Across the pillows with a sideways head
To warm about the corner where his feet

Were thrust out late; so God keep heat for
it

To please you always!

K. HEN.— Ay, not best at swords,
Good Louis; I was eased with swinging
steel!

In thick fields under lusty months of sun;
He would play blind, wring back my hand

in his,

Fall in hard thought. But see now; have
I not

A dozen French heads broken through the
neck

Hung at my sleeve here, madam, threes
and threes?

Guy d'Héricourt and Guerrat of Sallières,
Denis of Gordes, Peter of the March,

I have their tongues shut with gold coins
of mine

To seal the lips back; Jacques Becqueval
Shows teeth to nibble; if these fail me quite,

I'll say we have played at luck with God
and lost

By some trick's foil ; being no such fools of his

As chew the lazy purpose with their teeth,
Eat and wax full and laugh till hair falls out ;

Why, all the world lives without sleeping-
whiles,

God makes and mars and turns not weak
one whit,

But we must find some roost to perch and
blink

And wag thick chins at the world ; I hate
all men

That have large faces with dead eyes in
them

And good full fronts of fool.

QU. EL.— Am I worth words ?

K. HEN.—So quick, so quick ! are you
true wife to me ?

QU. EL.—I praise God for it, how loyal
I have lived

Your soul shall answer.

K. HEN.— What, I see the blood
That goes about the heart and makes you
hot,—

French blood, south blood ! I would not
tax you far,

But spare my Louis ; he did no such wrong
As I did when I let you slip my hand

In a new French glove you had sewn with
gold.

QU. EL.—This is a courteous holiness of
yours

That smites so in my face ; have you not
heard

Of men whose swervéd feet lie delicate
In common couches, with beds made to
them

Where priests shed no fair water ? Nay,
this breath

You chide me with makes treason to your
breath

That was my promise ; if I be your wife,
The unclean witness of my well-doing

Is your own sin.

K. HEN.— This is a fevered will
That you seem drunk withal.

QU. EL.— I bon'd-broken ?
You lay your taint my ways ; blush now a
little,

Pay but some blood ; do but defend your-
self :

It is a double poison in revolt
When it deserts the bare rebellion

To be half honest.

K. HEN.— You are not wise.

QU. EL.— I would not :
For wisdom smites awry, when foolishness
Keeps the clean away.

K. HEN.—Have you done yet with me ?

QU. EL.—I thrust your bags out with
round cheeks of gold

That were my people's : thickened with
men the sides

Of your sick, lean, and barren enterprise ;
Made capable the hunger of your state

With subsidies of mine own fruitfulness ;
Enriched the ragged ruin of your plans

With purple patched into the serge and
thread

Of your low state ; you were my pensioner ;
There's not a taste of England in your
breath

But I did pay for.

K. HEN.—Better I had never seen you
Than wear such words unchallenged. You
are my wife ;

I would the name were lost with mine to it.
I put no weight upon you of the shame

That is my badge in you ; the carriage of it
Pays for your gold.

QU. EL.— Ay, you will tax not me,
Being made so whole of your allegiance,
you,

Perfect as patience ? why, the cause, this
cause

(Be it what you say,—but saying it you lie,
Are simply liar, my lord !) the shame would
prick

A very dog to motion of such blood
As takes revenge for the shame done, the
shame

I' the body, in the sufferance of a blow,—
But you are patient.

K. HEN.—I will not find your sense.

QU. EL.—Nay, I think so ; when you do
understand,

Praise me a little then. For this time, sir,
I have no such will to trouble you ; and
here,

Even here shall leave-taking atone us
twain ;

Therefore farewell. When I am dead, my
lord,

I pray you praise me for my sufferance ;
You see I chide not ; nay, I say no word ;
I will put seals like iron on my mouth

Lest it revolt at me, or any shame
Push some worse phrase in than "Go^d
keep, you sir."

[Exit.

K. HEN.—I am her fool; no word to get
her dumb?
I am like the tales of Cornish Mark long
since,
To be so baffled. Well, being this way
eased,
I need not see her anger twice i' the eyes.
Get me a hawk to ride with presently.

[*Exit.*]

III. *At Woodstock.*

King Henry and ROSAMOND, seated.

Rosamond.

BELLE est madame, et bien douce en
son dire;
Dieu lui fit don de pleurer ou de rire
Plus doucement que femme qui soupire
Et puis oublie.

Bonne est madame, et me baise de grace;
Bien me convient baiser si belle face,
Bien me convient que si doux corps
embrasse
Et plus n'oublie.

Blonde est madame, ayant de tristes yeux;
Entre or et roux Dieu fit ses longs cheveux;
Bien mal me fait, si l'en aime bien mieùx.
Et moins oublie.

Blanche est madame et gracieuse avoir;
Ne sais si porte en corps azur ou noir;
Que m'a donné sa belle bouche à voir
Jamais n'oublie.

I bade them tell you I was sick; the sun
Pains me. Sit here.

K. HEN.—There's no sick show in you.
Sing still, and I will sit against your feet,
And see the singing measure in your
throat

Moved evenly; the headband leaves your
hair
Space to lie soft outside.

Ros.— Stoop then and touch
That I may bind it on your hands; I would
Fain have such hands to use so royally.
As you are king, sir, tell me without shame
Doth not your queen share praise with you,
show best

In all crowned ways, even as you do? I
have heard

Men praise the state in her and the great
shape;

Yet pray you, though you find her sweet
enow,

Praise her not over-measure; yet speak
truth;

But so I would not have you make her
praise

The proper pleasure of your lips, the
speech

Found best in them; yet do not scant her so
That I may see you tender of my pain,
Sparing to gall my wits with laud of her.

K. HEN.—O sweet, what sting is this
she makes in you?

A Frenchwoman, black-haired and with
gray lips

And fingers like a hawk's cut claw that
nips

One's wrist to carry—is this so great a
thing

As should wring wet out of your lids?

Ros.—

I know

That for my sake you pinch her praises in,
Starve her of right; do not so fearfully;

I shall best love you if you praise her,
seeing

I would not have you marry a worse face,
Say, than mine even; therefore be liberal,
Praise her to the full, till you shall see
that I

Fall sick upon your words, bid them be
pitiful

And bruise not me.

K. HEN.—I will not praise her to you.

Show me a little golden good of yours,
But some soft piece of gracious habit
grown

Common with you, quite new with me and
sweet.

It is the smell of roses where you come
That makes my sense faint now; you taste
of it,

Walk with it always.

Ros.—

Hark, the rain begins,

Slips like a bird that feels among shut
leaves;

One—two; it catches in the rose-branches
Like a word caught. Now, as I shut your
eyes,

Show me what sight gets first between the
lids,

So covered in to make false witness true.

Speak, and speak faith.

K. HEN.—I think this first; here once
The hard noon being too strong a weight
for us,

We lay against the edges of slant leaves
Facing the grass, our bodies touching them,
Cooled from the sun, and drank cold wine;
you had

A straight gown flaked with gold i' the
undersleeves;

And in your throat I caught the quick
faint red

Drunk down, that ran and stained it out of
white,

A long warm thread not colored like a
vein

But wine-colored; this was a joy to see.

O little throat, so tender to show red,

Would you not wear my lips as well, be
kissed

To a soft mark if one but touched you so?

I will not touch; only to feel you fast,

Lie down and take your feet inside both
hands,

Untie your hair to blind both eyes across—

Yea, there sweet, kiss me now.

Ros.— Do but stoop yet

And I will put my fingers where the hair

Is mixed upon the great crown's wearing-
place;

Sir, do you think I must fall old indeed

First of us two? look how between my
wrists

Even about the purplest seat of them

This lean scant flesh goes in. I am grown
past love;

The breath aches each way in my sobbing
sides

When I would sing, and tears climb up my
throat

In bitter breaks like swellings of round fruit

From the rind inwards, and my pulses go

Like fits of singing when the head gives
way

And leaves pure naught to stammer in
spoilt lips,

Even for this and my sad patience here

Built up and blinded in with growing green,

Use me not with your eyes untenderly,

But though I tire you, make you sigh at
me,

Say no blame overloud; I have flowers
only

And foolish ways to get me through the
day,

And songs of yours to piece with weeping
words

And famish and forget. Pray you go now,

I am the abuse of your compassion.

K. HEN.—I am gone presently; but for
this space

Give me poor leave to love you with mine
eyes

And feasted expectation of shut lips.

God help! your hair burns me to see like
gold

Burnt to pure heat; your color seen turns
in me

To pain and plague upon the temple-vein

That aches as if the sun's heat snap't the
blood

In hot mid measure; I could cry on you

Like a maid weeping-wise, you are so fair

It hurts me in the head, makes the life sick

I here in my hands, that one may see how
beats

Feverous blue upon my finger-tips.

Touch me now gently; I am as he that
saith

In the great song sick words and sorrowful

Of love's hard sweet and hunger of harsh
hours;

Your beauty makes me blind and hot, I am

Stabbed in the brows with it.

Ros.— Yea, God be good,

Am I fair yet? but say that I am fair,

Make me assured, praise me quite perfectly

Lest I doubt God may love me something
less

And his hot fear so nip me in the cheek

That I burn through. Nay, but go hence;

I would

Even lose the sweet I love, that I may
lose

The fear of losing it.

K. HEN.— I am gone quickly.

You know my life is made a pain to me

With angry work, harsh hands upon my
life

That finger in the torn sad sides of it

For the old thorn; touch but my face and
feel

How all is thwarted with thick networking

Where your lips found it smooth, clung
soft; there, now,

You take some bruise and gall of mine
clear out

With a cool kissing mouth.

Ros.— I had a will

To make some chafing matter with your
pride

And laugh at last; ay, also to be eased

Of some small wrath at your harsh tarri-
ance;

But you put sadness softly in my lips
With your marred speech. Look, the rain
slackens yet.

K. HEN.—I will go now that both our
hearts are sweet
And lips most peaceable; so shall we sleep
Till the next honey please them, with a
touch
Soft in our mouths; sing once and I am
gone.

ROS.—I will sing something heavy in the
word
That it may serve us; help me to such
words.

The marigolds have put me in my song,
They shine yet redly where you made
me it.

Hélas, madame, ayez de moi merci,
Qui porte en cœur triste fleur de souci;
N'est plus de rose, et plus ne vois ici
Que triste fleur.

M'est trop grand deuil, hélas, dans cette
vie;
Car vieil espoir me lie et me délie,
Et triste fleur m'est force, ô belle amie,
Porter en cœur.

See the rain! have you care to ride by
this?

Yea, kiss me one strong kiss out of your
heart,

Do not kiss more; I love you with my lips,
My eyes and heart, your love is in my
blood,

I shall die merely if you hold to me.

IV. *Ante-Chapel at Shene. Choir-music
from within. In the passage outside,*
ARTHUR, a boy of the choir, reading.

Enter SIR ROBERT DE BOUCHARD.

Bouchard.

SHE spares me time to think of it;
well, so
I pull this tumbled matter square with God,
What sting can men's mouths hurt me
with? What harm
Because the savor of undieted sense
Palates not me? the taste and smell of
love
Sickens me, being so fed with its keen use
That delicate divisions of soft touch

Feel gross to me as dullest accident?
That way of will most men take pleasure in
It tires my feet to walk. Then for the
harder game,—
Joust where the steel swings, fight that
clears up blood,
I want the relish too; being no such sinewed
ape,

Blunder of brawn and jolted muscle-work,
As beats and bleeds about his iron years,
Anoints his hide with stupid lust and sleep,
Fattens to mould and dies; rubs sides with
dust,

Ending his riddle. I have seen time
enough,

Struck blows and tricked and paid and
won and wrought,

I know not well why wrought. A monk,
now—there's right work;

Dull work or wise, body and head keep
up;

I should have pulled in scapular and alb
To shut my head up and its work, who
knows?

Arthur (outside). They told me I should
see the king come in;

I shall not get the words out clear enough,
No time, I doubt. I wonder will he wear
Chain-mail or samite-work? I would
take mail,—

A man fares best in good close joints of
mail.

Fautor.—I seem to catch it up their way;
This time I'll come off clear yet. One
rhyme sticks—

(He repeats.)

*Fautor meus, magne Deus, quis adversum
tibi stabit?*

*Parum ridet qui te videt; sponsam sponsus
accusabit;*

*Sicut herbam qui superbam flatu gentem
dissipabit,*

*Flectit cælum quasi velum quo personam
implicabit.*

There, all straight out, clean forthright
singing, this;

I'll see the king in the face and speak out
hard

That he shall hear me. Last time all fell
wrong;

I had that song about the lily-plants
Growing up goodly in their green of time
With gold heads and gold sprinkles in the
neck

And God among them, feeding like a lamb,
That takes out sin; so I let slip his name,
Euh ! I can touch the prints of the big
switch;
One, six, twelve,—ah ! the sharp small
suckers stung
Like a whole hive loose, as Hugh's arm
swung out,
Good for this king that I shall see to have
Fine padded work and silk seats pillow-puft
Instead of wood to twist on painfully.

BOUCH.—So comes mine answer in; I
thank you, Lord;
I'll none of this. Give men clean work and
sleep,

And baby bodies this priest's blessed way.
But, being so set between the time's big
jaws

To dodge and keep me from the shut o' the
teeth,

Shuffle from lip to lip, a shell with priest
For kernel in the husk and rind of knight,
No chick bit in me, but nigh swallowed
whole,—

Who says my trick that, played on either,
makes

Music for me and sets my head on work,
Is devil's lesson? Pity that lives by milk
Suckles not me; I see no reason set
To keep me from the general use of things
Which no more holds the great regard of
man

Than children spoiling flies. Respect and
habit

Find no such tongue against me; I but
wear

The raiment of my proper purpose, not
The threadworn coat of use. Even who
keeps on

Such garments for the reputation's want,
Wears them unseamed inside. The boy
there now—

ARTH.—Yea, I loathe Hugh. Peter he
beat, and me,—

Me twice, because that day the queen
came in

I twisted back my head to thrust well
through

The carved work's double lattice to get
sight

Of a tall woman with gold clothes and hair
That shone beyond her clothes; so sharp
he smote,

The grim beast Hugh with boarish teeth
and hair

All his chin long and where no hair should
be !

And Peter pinched and pushed all vespers
through

To get my turn and see her. How she
went

I holding her throat up, with her round neck
out

Curdwhite, no clôt in it not smooth to
stroke,—

All night I shook in sleep for that one
thing,

Stirred with my feet and pulled about
awry.

I think too she kept smiling with her
mouth

(Her wonderful red quiet mouth) and
prayed

All to herself. Now that men call a
mouth,—

And Hugh's begrimed big lips you call the
same

That make a thick smile up with all their
fat

Never but when he gets one by the nape
To make him sprawl and weep. How all
the hair

Drew the hard shining of the candle-fires
And shone back harder with a flare in it

Through all the plaits and bands. Then
Hugh said,—“Look,

You Arthur, that white woman with such
eyes

Is worse in hell than any devil that seethes;
She keeps the color of it in her hair

That shakes like flame so. Wait till I
get in

And teach the beast's will in your female
flesh

With some red slits in it, to get out loose
In such dog's ways.” But Hugh lied hard,

I think;

For he said after in his damned side-room
What fierce account God made of such a
name

And how the golden king that made God
songs

Chid at their ways and called them this
and that;

And he loved many queens with just such
hair

And such good eyes, and had more scores
of them

Than I have stripes since last red week
on me.

So I can see Hugh lied. For no Jew's wife

Looked ever so, or found such ways to hold

Her sweet straight body.—But my next,—that's hard. *(Reads.)*

BOUCH.—Yea, there the snake's head blinks? yea, doth it there?

O sweet thorn that worries the kind flesh! Yea, but the devil's seedling side-graft,

Lord,

That pinches out the sap.—I'll talk to him.

Enter from the Chapel, QUEEN ELEANOR.

QU. EL.—Ah, you here, Bouchard? is it well with you

When you hear music? I am hot i' the face;

Kiss me now, Robert, where the red begins,

And tell me, does no music hurt you? Ah,—

Will no man stop them?

BOUCH.—Speak me lower then; No time to kiss bad words out on the mouth

As one treads flame out with the heel. Well were it,

That you should keep the purpose in your lips

From knowledge of your eyes; let none partake,

No inquisition of the air get out One secret, or the imperious sun compel

One word of you. Wisdom doth sheathe her hand

To smite the fool behind.

QU. EL.—I pray you, sir, Let be your sentence; O, I am sick to death,

Could lie down here and bruise my head with stone,

Cover up hands and feet and die at once. Nathless I will not have her eyes and hair

Crown-circled, and her breasts embraced with gold,

When the grave catches me. It is mere time,

The mere sick fault of age I limp with; yea,

Time was I had put such fierce occasion on Like a new scented glove; but now this

thing

Tastes harsh as if I drank that blood indeed

Which I'll not even have spilled in dust; it clings,

Under the lip, makes foul the sense,—ha, there,

I knew that noise was close upon my head.

Arthur (outside)

Matrem pater, fratrem frater, iste condemnabit eum;

Erit nemo quem postremo tu non incusabis reum

Nihil tactum quod non fractum; fulgor ibit ante Deum;

Mea caro prodest raro; non est laudi caput meum.

QU. EL.—Say now you love me, Robert, I fear God,

Fear is more bitter than a hurt worm's tooth,

But if God lets one love me this side heaven

And puts his breath not out, then shall I laugh

I' the eyes of him for mere delight, pluck off

Fear that ties man to patience, white regret,

All mixture of diseased purpose, made To cut the hand at wrist; remorse and doubt

Shall die of want in me.

BOUCH.—Too much of this; Get your eyes back. Think how some ten

days gone He drew loose hair into his either hand

And how the speech got room between their mouths

Only to breathe in and go out; at times, How she said "Eleanor" to try the name,

Found not so sweet as Rosamond to say; Perhaps too, "Love, the Frenchwoman

gets thin, Her mouth is something older than her hair;

Count by these petals, pluck them three and three,

What months it takes to rid the sun of her, And make some grave-grass wealthier;"

will you bear

This?

QU. EL.—Do men tie the sword this way, or that?

Were I a knight now I would gird it or

Strained hard upon the clasp, would feel
the hilt
Bruise my side blue and work the stamp
therein
Deep as blood hides i' the flesh. I love
pain well to feel;
As to wring in one's fingers,—the least
pain;
It kills the hard impatience of the soul,
Cools heat of head, makes bearable all
shame
That finds a work to do; yea, very sense
Tastes it for comfort, gets assured with it,
Being strong to smite the flesh, and wear
pain well.
She must hate pain, that woman; it should
jar
Her thin soft sense through, tear it up like
silk;
What, if worms eat me that sweet flesh in
time?

Arthur (outside).

*Motu mentis quasi ventis facit maria le-
vari;
Ex avena flatu plena facit dulcem sonum
dari;
Tument colles quasi folles quia jussit ex-
sufflari,
Et quæ deplet manu replet labra calicis
amari.*

QU. EL.—Ay, bitter; for it bites and
burns one through
As the sharp sting of wine curdles the
mouth.

He would not wed her if I died? I know,—
A laugh with all his teeth in it, the beard
So twisted from the underlip about,—
Eh, said he that he would not marry her?

BOUCH.—Nay, but who deemed else?
no man certainly.

When the weak lust falls dead and eyeless
flesh

Is as a beast asleep and sick of meat,
What marvel if no spirit there holds out?
No appetite, that like the unchilded sea
(In whose unprofitable and various womb
Fair ships lie sidelong with a fisher's buoy
Miles down in water) hungers for such orts
As riot spares lean want, is yet so wide,
So vast of ravin or so blind in scope,
As can abide the chewed and perished
meats

That relish died upon. Fill famine to the
lips,

The word of bread shall turn his throat
awry;

So doth the sense of love all love put out,
Aud kiss it from that very place o' the soul
Mere wish made sweet indeed.

QU. EL.— I am sorry for you;
This foolish poison in your tongue forgets
All better things to say.

BOUCH.— It is dull truth;
This gift found in me should much profit
you.

QU. EL.—I care not for you; I could
wish you hanged

But for some love that sticks here in my
head,

Some stupid trick caught up,—like play
with straws,

Tune-burden twisted over in sick ears
That keeps up time with fever; so habit
fools me

To use you like a friend.

BOUCH.— It is a piteous thing
When honesty grown gray has hairs pluck-
ed out

By such unreverent fingers. Come, let be;
I marvel what lewd matter jars your talk
So much past tune.

QU. EL.—'T is better talk than do
Where doing means actual harm. Per-
chance this thing

Shall trap our souls indeed,—eh?

BOUCH.— Doubt me not;
I think so truly. Prithee let us in,
Wash hands and weep.

QU. EL.—You have marred my will to
prayer.

God is right gracious, may be he shall help,
As we do honorably. I will not go.

Arthur (outside.)

*Multo fletu non expletu facit teneras pu-
pillas;*

*Dente tangi, manu frangi jubet nitidas
mamillas;*

*Quum amane parum gene nudas exhibent
maxillas,*

*Fiet gravis odor suavis, si quis osculabit
illas.*

QU. EL.—Who made that hymn?

BOUCH.— Aloys of Blois.

QU. EL.— Ah priest!
You should be priest, my Bouchard, scalp
and mouth,

You have such monk's ways. If she be
foul to God

And her sweet breath ill savor in his lip,
Then shall her blood-spilling be sacrifice;
And cleanse us in the blow. I do thank
God,

I praise the wording of his prayer, will
make

Fast and sweet words and thereto thanks-
giving,

Be married to his love, my purpose making
Such even wing and way with his.

BOUCH.— Yea, first
Show me the perfect fashion of her death.

QU. EL.—What fashion? feel this flasket
next my waist,

Full to the wicked lips, crammed up and
full

With drugs and scents that touch you in
the mouth

And burn you all up, face and eyes at
once,—

They say so; they may lie, who knows?
but kill

The thing does really; do you kiss me
now?

BOUCH.—Some Frenchman gave my
queen the thing to keep?

QU. EL.—I wot well England would not
give a queen

Six grains of salt she paid in salt of tears.
France makes good blood, made Becqueval

and me;

I bade him get me for love's sake,—years
gone,—

Such mortal matter. Ah, poor Becqueval,
A good time had we in that pleasure-
walk;

I with few dames about the white pear-
trees,—

Spring was it? yea, for green sprang thick
as flame

And the birds bit the blossom and sang
hard,—

Now sat and tore up flowers to waste, wet
strips

Of hyacinths, rain-sodden bells,—then
stood

To make them braid my running hair well
back,

Pluck out the broken plait of March-lilies,
Lest one should mutter,—“Ha, the queen

comes late,

Her hair unweaved and cheeks red as
though

Fingers and lips had kissed and fondled
them,—

Ay, pity of her!” so for that,—what words
I choke with saying!

BOUCH.— Weak in words indeed;
See how I shut them back upon the

mouth.

The king comes here to chapel; let us
hence.

QU. EL.—I am very ready. Nay, this
turn it is;

I am so free and pleasant of my mood,
I can scarce go for simple joyousness.

[*Exeunt.*]

Arthur (outside.)

*Pater, e me mendas deme, fac ut cingar
prece suavi;*

*Pater, e me vinum premi, fac ut purgar
face gravi;*

*Tu me bonis imple donis ut implentur melle
favi,*

*Tu me rege tua lege, quia mundum non
amavi.*

V. *At Woodstock.*

Rosamond.

LATE summer now, but in the fair blue
spring

How shall God hear me? Once (men say)
Lord Christ

Walked between rivers in his rose-garden
With some old saint who had a wife by

him

To feed with apple-pulp and honeycomb,
A wife like Mary in King David's time

Long after,—but a snake so stung his foot
He came back never, being lame at heel.

A story some priest wrote out all in gold,
Painting the leaves green, for a king to

read;

But the king burnt it; whom God there-
fore took

And sold him to some Turk, with eyes
thrust out.

Here in my garden, now his feet are healed
From those twin stains where bit the hang-
ing-nails,

He would not come to let me kiss them
whole,

Wash them with oil and wet fruits bruised
to juice,

Rare waters stained and scented through
with rose,

Though my hair be as long as Magdalen's,

As yellow, maybe. Mine eyes and eyelids
ache,
Too thick to see past, weeping swells them
blue;
And the veins narrow visibly and waste
Where next the elbow neither hand could
span;
The flesh that wore glad color is gone gray,
And soon the hair will; yea, not milk but
blood
Fills my breast through, not good for any
child
To lay sweet lips to; I am as a gold cup
With beateu edges and dry mouths of dust,
That tears weep into, and that cunning
man
By whose wit I was fashioned lets them
run
And lets men break me. If I were well
dead,
Then were the tears all spilled over the
ground
And I made empty; also I pray God
To get me broken quickly; else, who
knows,
If I live long till these years too seem gray
As a flower ruined, then ere sleep at night
I shall be grown too stark and thin to pray,
Nor will God care to set me praying then.
Maids will keep round me, girls with
smooth warm hair
When mine is hard, no silk in it to feel,—
Tall girls to dress me, laughing under-
breath,
Too low for gold to tighten at the waist.
Eh, the hinge sharpens at the gate across?
Five minutes now to get the green walk
through
And turn,—the chesnut leaves will take his
hair
If he turn quick; or I shall hear some bud
Fall, or some pebble's clink along the fence
Or stone his heel grinds, or torn lime-
blossom
Flung at me from behind; not poppies now
Nor marigolds, but rose and lime-flower.

Enter QUEEN ELEANOR.

*Qu. EL. (to Bouchard within).—*Outside,—
outside,—I bade you keep outside;
Look to her people; tell me **not** of shame;
Look to her women.

Ros.— Ah God! shall this be so?

*Qu. EL.—*I'll have no man at hand to
help her through;

Not till the king be come; tush, tell not
me,

No treaties—talk of promises, you talk!
I will not strike her; look to them; Lord
God!

I bade you have a heed; there, go now;
there!—

Here, golden lady, look me in the face;
Give me both hands, that I may read you
through,

See how the blood runs, how the eyes take
light,

How the mouth sets when one is beautiful,
Ah sweet, and shall not men praise God for
you?

*Ros.—*I shall die now. Madam, you
are the queen.

*Qu. EL.—*Does fear so speak?

Ros.— Not so; for pain with me
Is a worn garment or that common food
That sleep comes after best; what wrath
will do

I make no reckoning with.

Qu. EL.— What love hath done
I keep the count of; did he not hold this
way?

Did you not set both hands behind his
head;

And curl your body like a snake's? not set
Each kiss between the hair of lip and chin,
Cover your face upon his knees, draw
down

His hands on you, shut either eye to kiss?
Then it was "Love, a gold band either
side,

A gold ring to pull close each knot of
hair!"

"Nay, not so; kiss me rather like a bird"
That lets his bill cut half the red core
through

And rend and bite for pleasure,—eh! I
felt

What pinched my lips up after;"—was it
not?

Did it not sting i' the blood, pluck at the
breath

If a bird caught his song up in the leaves?
Eh! this was sweet too, that you called the
king

Some girls name with no royal note in it
To spoil the chatter,—some name like a
kiss

The lips might loose and hesitate upon?
He would weave up this yellow skein of
yours

To knot and ravel, though his hands might
 pluck
 Some plait a little overmuch; your throat,
 Pure pearl, too fair to swell or strain with
 sobs,
 One would not have a rough thing rasp it
 round,
 Not steel to touch it, only soft warm silk.
 Will you not sing now, loose your hair
 well out
 For me to hold the gracious west? Alas,
 So white you grow, love; the head drops
 indeed,
 A moan comes out of that kissed mouth of
 yours!
 You harlot, are you sick to look at me?
 Though my heel bruise you in the gold
 snake's head
 I choke to touch you.

Ros.— I shall die without.
 But give me time to speak; wherefore am I
 That am made soft in this my body's
 strength
 And in my soul smooth and affectionate
 So taken in your loathing? you do not
 right
 To hate me that am harmless; see my
 face,
 You will not smite me afterwards; this sin
 Was not begot of wilfulness in me
 To be your pain and a shame burning you;
 Yea verily, no evil will or wit
 Made me your traitor; there came not in
 my mind
 One thought to gall you past good patience;
 yea,
 If you could see the pained poor heart in
 me
 You would find nothing hateful toward
 you
 In all the soft red record its blood makes.

Qu. EL.—Thou art more fool than thief;
 I have not seen

A beaten beast so humble of its mouth,
 So shaming me as you; I am ashamed
 That such a thing can see me in the eyes.
 You do not think that I shall let you go
 Being well caught? Ah harlot, have you
 made

Thief's japes at me, lewd guesses on my
 wrath,
 Spat towards me? and now God gives me
 you

I shall play soft and touch you with my
 gloves.

Nay, make my lips two kissing friends of
 yours

Because mere love and a sweet fault i' the
 flesh

Put you to shame? Look, you shall die for
 that,

Because you sinned not out of hate to me
 That have and hate you. Do not shake at
 it,

I will not strike you yet; what hands are
 mine

To take such hangman's matter to their
 work

And be clean after? but a charm I have
 Quick to undo God's cunning west of flesh

And mix with deadly waters the glad blood
 That hath so pure a sense and subtleness.

This is a gracious death made out for you
 And praiseworthy; you shall die no base

way,
 Seeing what king's lips have fastened in
 your neck.

Choose me this edge to try your flesh upon
 That feels so precious—like a holy thing

Kissed by some great saint's mouth, laid
 afterwards

With taper flame in middle altar-work,
 All over soft as your own lips that fed

Between the king's eyes—

Ros.— Madam, be merciful,
 You hurt me, pinching in my throat so
 hard.

Alas, ah God, will not one speak for me?
 Qu. EL.—Yea, then choose this.

Ros.— I will not choose; God help
 I will not choose; I have no eyes to choose;
 I will be blind and save the sight of choice.
 So shall my death, not looking on itself,
 Fall like a chance.

Qu. EL.—Put me not past mine oath;
 I am sworn deep to lay no stroke on you.

Ros.—I will not drink; so shall I make
 On death's own bitter will. Do not look
 hard;

I know you are more sweet at heart than
 so.

Make me the servant of your meanest
 house,

And let your girls smite me some thrice a
 day,

I will bear that; yea, I will serve you and
 be

Stricken for wage and bruised; give me two
 days

A poor man puts away for idleness,

Lest my soul ache with you,—nay, but,
sweet God,

Is there no thing will say a word for me,
A little sad word said inside her ears
To make them burn for piteous shame?
you see

How I weep, yea, fear wrings my body
round;

You know not hardly how afraid I am,
But my throat sickens with pure fear, my
blood

Falls marred in me; and God should love
you so

Being found his friend and made com-
passionate—

QU. EL.—I have a mind to pluck thee
with my hands,

Tear thy hair backward, tread on thee.
By God,

I thought no sin so sick and lame a fool
As this lust is.

ROS.— But I will drink indeed,
I will not yet; give me the sword to see
How that must hurt.

QU. EL.—Yea, this way will you see?

ROS.—I cannot hold it by the edge;
it is

Too keen to touch the sides thereof with
sight.

Yea, then, your drink.

QU. EL.—To spill here in the ground?
It were good game to get white iron out
As did God's priest with a king's harlot
once,

Burn up your hair and brand between your
eyes

That I might have you wear me so in red.
Besides to-night the king will look for you,
“Eh, Rosamond? she hides then closer
yet,

May be for fear of passengers that slip
Between those waters; I shall have her
now,

Ha love, have I said right?” would he kiss
you,

Spoilt face and all?—You will die simply
then?

You do the wiselier.

ROS.— God be pitiful!
No man in this sharp world to speak for
me

Of all that go and talk,—why now they
laugh,

Chatter of me, base people, say ‘foul
things,—

Ah God, sweet lord, that death should be
so hard.

Nay, thou fair death, make me not wroth
with thee;

Use me the best way found in thee, fair
death,

And thou shalt have a pleasure of mine end,
For I will kiss thee with a patient lip
Even on this husk of thine; thou tender
death,

Do me none evil and no shame, that am
So soft and have such suferance of thee
And talk such lovers’ little talk; fair death,
Where thou hast kissed the latest lip of
man’s

None shall drink after.

QU. EL.— Cease, and be not lewd;
Cease, and make haste. What harlot’s wit
hast thou

To play death’s friend this way?

ROS.— Yea, friends we are;
I have no breath that makes a curse for
you,

All goes to fashion prayer that God sow
pity

I’ the grounds of wrath; you see me that I
drink;

So God have patience.

QU. EL.— It is done indeed.
Perchance now it should please you to be
sure

This were no poison? as it is, it is.

Ha, the lips tightens so across the teeth
They should bite in, show blood; how
white she is,

Yea, white! dead green now like a fingered
leaf.

Enter KING HENRY and BOUCHARD.

‘K. HEN.—Is it all done? Yea, so, love
come to me,

You are quite safe, held fast; kiss me a
little.

Speak, hast thou done?

QU. EL.— So, would you praise me
now?

It is done well, and as I thought of it.

K. HEN.—O, sweetest thing, you do not
bleed with her?

She cannot speak. By God’s own holiness
Each fear put on you shall be as blood
wrung

From her most damnéd body. Do but
speak.

This is just fear. Ay, come close in and weep.

This is your fear?

ROS.— Nay, but my present death.
Doth fear so ruin all the blood in one
As this spoils mine? Let me get breath to help;

And yet no matter; I will not speak at all,
I can die without speaking.

K. HEN. (*to the Queen*).—Listen to this,
Thou art worse caught than anything in hell,—

To put thy hands upon this body—God,
Curse her for me! I will not slay thee yet,

But damn thee some fine quiet way—O love,
That I might put thee in my heart indeed
To be wept well! thou shalt be healed of her—

Poor sweet; she hath even touched thee in the neck

Thou art so hurt. This is not possible
O God, that I could see what thou wilt do
With her when she is damned! Thou piece of hell,

Is there no way to crawl out of my hate
By saving her? pray God then till I come,
For if my hands had room for thee I would
Hew thy face out of shape.—She will not die.

This heat in her is pure, and the sweet life
With holy color doth assure itself
In death's sharp face; she will not die at all.

Thou art all foiled, found fool and laughable

And halt and spat upon and sick,—O love

Make me not mad! if you do so with me
I am but dead.

ROS.— Do not so cry on me;
I am hurt sore, but shall not die of it.
Be gracious with me, set your face to mine,
Tell me sweet things. I have no pain at all,

I am but woman and make words of pain
Where I am well indeed; only the breath
Catches, for joy to have you close. I would

Sing your song through; yea, I am good
you said,

Gracious and good; I cannot sing that out,
But am I good that kiss your lips or no?

That keeps yet sweet; there is not so much pain

L

As one might weep for; a little makes us weep;

To die grown old were sad, but I die worth

Being kissed of you; leave me some space to breathe,—

I have thanks yet. (*Dies*.)

QU. EL.—So is the whole played out;
Yea, kiss him. Ah, my Bouchard, you said that?

K. HEN.—Ay, keep the mouth at ease;
shut down the lids;

You see I am not riotously moved,
But peaceable, all heat gone out of me.

This is some trick, some riddle of a dream,
Have you not known such dreams? I bid you stand,

Being king and lord, I make you come and go;

But say I bid my love turn and kiss me,
No more obedience? here at sight of her
The heart of rule is broken. No more obedience?

She hath forgotten this; were I a man,
Even that would slay me; I beseech you, sir,

Take no care of me; I can bid you; see,
I touch her face; the lips begin to stir,
Gather up color; is there sound or speech,
Or pleasant red under the white of death?
She will speak surely; for dead flesh is gray

And even the goodliest pattern wrought of man

Coldness and change disfigure; what was red

A new disconsolate color overpaints,
And ever with some ill deformity
The secret riddle and pure sense of flesh
Becomes defeated and the rebel taste
Makes new revolt at it; I pray take note of me,

Here comes no new thing; do you not see her face,

How it hath shut up close like any flower,
With scents of sleep and hesitating sweet
I' the heaviest petal of it? Note her eyes,
They move and alter; and if I touched her lips

(Which lest she wake I will not) they would be

As red as mine; yea that pure cheek of hers

Turn redder

QU. EL.— Will you speak to him?

BOUCH.— K. HEN.—Sir, pardon me, I know she is but dead, She is not as I am; we have sense and soul; Who smites me on the mouth or plucks by the hair, I know what feels it; stab me with a knife, I can show blood; and when the eyes turn wet, There's witness for me and apparent proof I am no less than man; though in the test I show so abject and so base a slave As grooms may snarl at, and your stabled hound Find place more worth preferment. For the queen, See how strong laughter takes her by the throat And plucks her lips ! her teeth would bite, no doubt, But she keeps quiet; she should live in- deed; She hath mere motion, and such life in her Accuses and impeaches the Lord God, Who wrought so miserably the shapes of man With such sad cunning. Lo you, sir, she weeps; Now see I well how vile a thing it is To wear the label and the print of life Being fashioned so unhappily; for we Share no more sense nor worthier scope of time Than the life breath that is in swine and apes As honorable, now she that made us right In the keen balance and sharp scale of God Becomes as pasture and gross meat for death,	Fair lord— Whereon the common ravin of his throat Makes rank invasion. Time was, I could not speak But she would praise or chide me; now I talk All this time out, mere baffled waste, to get That word of her I find not. Tell me, sweet, Have I done wrong to thee ? spoken thee ill ? Nay, for scorn hurts me, Rosamond; be wise, As I am patient; do but bow your face,— By God she will not ! Abide you but awhile And we shall hear her; for she will not fail. She will just turn her sweet head quietly And kiss me peradventure; say no word, And you shall see her; doubtless she will grow Sorry to vex me; see now, here are two She hath made weep, and God would punish her For hardness, ay though she were twice as fair, He would not love her; look, she would fain wake, It makes her mouth move and her eyelids rise To feel so near me.—Ay, no wiser yet ? Then will I leave you; may be she will weep To have her hands made empty of me; yea, Lend me your hand to cover close her face, That she may sleep well till we twain be gone; Cover the mouth up; 'come each side of me.
--	---

CHASTELARD,

A TRAGEDY.

Au milieu de l'avril, entre les lys naquit
Son corps, qui de blancheur les lys mêmes vainquit;
Et les roses, qui sont du sang d'Adonis teintes,
Furent par sa couleur de leur verneil dépeintes.

ROUSSEAU.

What need ye heh ! and how ! ladies ?
What need ye how ! for me ?
Ye never saw grace at a graceless face ;
Queen Mary has nane to gie.

The Queen's Marie.

I DEDICATE THIS PLAY,
AS A PARTIAL EXPRESSION OF REVERENCE AND GRATITUDE.
TO THE CHIEF OF LIVING POETS ;
TO THE FIRST DRAMATIST OF HIS AGE ;
TO THE GREATEST EXILE, AND THEREFORE TO THE
GREATEST MAN OF FRANCE ;

TO

VICTOR HUGO.

PERSONS.

DARNLEY.
MARY STUART.
MARY BEYTON.
MARY SEATON.
MARY CARMICHAEL.
MARY HAMILTON.
PIERRE DE BOSCOSEL DE
CHASTELARD.

MURRAY.
RANDOLPH.
MORTON.
LINDSAY.
FATHER BLACK.

*Guards, Burgesses, a Preacher,
Citizens, &c.*

Another Yle is there toward the Northe, in the See Ocean, wher that ben fulle
cruelle and ful evele Wommen of Nature: and thei han precious Stones in hire Eyen ;
and thei ben of that kynde, that zif they beholden ony man, thei slen him anon with
the beholdynge, as doth the Basilisk.

MAUNDEVILE'S *Voiage and Travaile*, Ch. xxviii.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Upper Chamber in Holyrood.**The four MARIÉS.*MARY BEATON (*sings*):—

1.

Le navire
Est à l'eau ;
Entends rire
Ce gros flot
Que fait luire
Et bruire
Le vieux sire
Aquila.

2.

Dans l'espace
Du grand air
Le vent passe
Comme un fer ;
Siffle et sonne,
Tombe et tonne ;
Prend et donne
À la mer

3.

Vois, la brise
Tourne au nord,
Et la bise
Souffle et mord
Sur ta pure
Chevelure
Qui murmure
Et se tord.

MARY HAMILTON.

You never sing now but it makes you sad ;
Why do you sing ?

MARY BEATON.

I hardly know well why ;
It makes me sad to sing and very sad
To hold my peace.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

I know what saddens you.

MARY BEATON.

Prithee, what ? what ?

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Why, since we came from France,
You have no lover to make stuff for songs,

MARY BEATON.

You are wise, for there my pain begins
indeed,
Because I have no lovers out of France.

MARY SEYTON.

I mind me of one Olivier de Pesme,
(You knew him, sweet) a pale man with
short hair,
Wore tied at sleeve the Beaton color.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Blue—

I know, blue scarfs. I never liked that
knight.

MARY HAMILTON.

Me ? I know him ? I hardly knew his
name.

Black, was his hair ? no, brown.

MARY SEYTON.

Light pleases you :

I have seen the time brown served you well
enough.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Lord Darnley's is a mere maid's yellow.

MARY HAMILTON.

No ;

A man's good color.

MARY SEYTON.

Ah, does that burn your blood ?

Why, what a bitter color is this red
That fills your face ! if you be not in 'ove,
I am no maiden.

MARY HAMILTON.

Nay, God help true hearts !

I must be stabbed with love then, to the
bone,

Yea, to the spirit, past cure.

MARY SEYTON.

What were you saying ?

I see some jest run up and down your lips.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Finish your song ; I know you have more
of it ;

Good sweet, I pray you do.

MARY BEATON.

I am too sad.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

This will not sadden you to sing ; your song

Tastes sharp of sea and the sea's bitterness,
But small pain sticks on it.

MARY BEATON.

Nay, it is sad;
For either sorrow with the beaten lips
Sings not at all, or if it does get breath
Sings quick and sharp like a hard sort of
mirth:
And so this song does; or I would it did,
That it might please me better than it
does.

MARY SEYTON.

Well, as you choose then. What a sort of
men
Crowd all about the squares!

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Ay, hateful men;
For look how many talking mouths be
there,
So many angers show their teeth at us.
Which one is that, stooped somewhat in
the neck,
That walks so with his chin against the
wind,
Lips sideways shut? a keen-faced man—lo
there,
He that walks midmost.

MARY SEYTON.

That is Master Knox.
He carries all these folk within his skin,
Bound up as 'twere between the brows of
him
Like a bad thought; their hearts beat inside
his;
They gather at his lips like flies in the
sun,
Thrust sides to catch his face.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Look forth; so—push
The window—further—see you anything?

MARY HAMILTON.

They are well gone; but pull the lattice in,
The wind is like a blade aslant. Would
God

I could get back one day I think upon
The day we four and some six after us
Sat in that Louvre garden and plucked
fruits
To cast love-lots with in the gathered
grapes;

This way; you shut your eyes and reach
and pluck,
And catch a lover for each grape you get.
I got but one, a green one, and it broke
Between my fingers and it ran down through
them.

MARY SEYTON.

Ay, and the queen fell in a little wrath
Because she got so many, and tore off
Some of them she had plucked unwittingly
She said, against her will. What fell to
you?

MARY BEATON.

Me? nothing but the stalk of a stripped
bunch
With clammy grape-juice leavings at the
tip.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Ay, true, the queen came first and she won
all;
It was her bunch we took to cheat you
with.
What will you weep for that now? for you
seem
As one that means to weep. God pardon
me!
I think your throat is choking up with
tears.
You are not well, sweet, for a lying jest
To shake you thus much.

MARY BEATON.

I am well enough:
Give not your pity trouble for my sake.

MARY SEYTON.

If you be well sing out your song and
laugh,
Though it were but to fret the fellows
there.—
Now shall we catch her secret washed and
wet
In the middle of her song; for she must
weep
If she sing through.

MARY HAMILTON.

I told you it was love;
I watched her eyes all through the masquing
time
Feed on his face by morsels; she must
weep.

MARY BEATON.

4

Le navire
Passe et luit,
Puis chavire
À grand bruit;
Et sur l'onde
La plus blonde
Tête au monde
Flotte et fuit.

Moi, je rame,
Et l'amour,
C'est ma flamme,
Mon grand jour,
Ma chandelle
Blanche et belle,
Ma chapelle
De séjour.

6

Toi, mon âme
Et ma foi,
Sois ma dame
Et ma loi;
Sois ma mie,
Sois Marie,
Sois ma vie,
Toute à moi !

MARY SEYTON.

I know the song; a song of Chastelard's
He made in coming over with the Queen.
How hard it rained ! he played that over
twice

Sitting before her, singing each word soft,
As if he loved the least she listened to.

MARY HAMILTON.

No marvel if he loved it for her sake ;
She is the choice of women in the world,
Is she not, sweet ?

MARY BEATON.

I have seen no fairer one.

MARY SEYTON.

And the most loving : did you note last
night
How long she held him with her hands and
eyes,
Looking a little sadly, and at last
Kissed him below the chin and parted so
As the dance ended ?

MARY HAMILTON.

This was courtesy ;
So might I kiss my singing-bird's red bill
After some song, till he bit short my lip.

MARY SEYTON.

But if a lady hold her birds anights
To sing to her between her fingers—ha ?
I have seen such birds.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

O, You talk empty ;
She is full of grace ; and marriage in good
time
Will wash the fool called scandal off men's
lips.

MARY HAMILTON.

I know not that ; I know how folk would
gibe
If one of us pushed courtesy so far.
She has always loved love's fashions well ;
you wot,
The marshal, head friend of this Chaste-
lard's,
She used to talk with ere he brought her
here
And sow their talk with little kisses thick
As roses in rose-harvest. For myself,
I cannot see which side of her that lurks
Which snares in such wise all the sense of
men ;
What special beauty, subtle as man's eye
And tender as the inside of the eyelid is,
There grows about her.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

I think her cunning speech—
The soft and rapid shudder of her breath
In talking—the rare tender little laugh—
The pitiful sweet sound like a bird's sigh
When her voice breaks ; her talking does it
all.

MARY SEYTON.

I say, her eyes with those clear perfect
brows :
It is the playing of those eyelashes,
The lure of amorous looks as sad as love,
Plucks all souls toward her like a net.

MARY HAMILTON.

What, what !
You praise her in too lover-like a wise
For women that praise women ; such
report

Is like robes worn the rough side next the skin,
Frets where it warms.

MARY SEYTON.

You think too much in French,

Enter DARNLEY.

Here comes your thorn; what glove against it now?

MARY HAMILTON.

O, God's good pity! this a thorn of mine? It has not run deep in yet.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

I am not sure:

The red runs over to your face's edge.

DARNLEY.

Give me one word; nay, lady for love's sake;

Here, come this way; I will not keep you; no.

—O my sweet soul, why do you wrong me thus?

MARY HAMILTON.

Why will you give me for men's eyes to burn?

DARNLEY.

What, sweet, I love you as mine own soul loves me;

They shall divide when we do.

MARY HAMILTON.

I cannot say;

DARNLEY.

Why, look you, I am broken with the queen;

This is the rancour and the bitter heart That grows in you; by God it is nought else.

Why, this last night she held me for a fool—

Ay, God wot, for a thing of stripe and bell.

I bade her make me marshal in her masque—

I had the dress here painted, gold and grey

(That is, not grey but a blue-green like this)—

She tells me she had chosen her marshal, she,

The best o' the world for cunning and sweet wit;

And what sweet fool but her sweet knight, God help!

To serve her with that three-inch wit of his?

She is all fool and fiddling now; for me, I am well pleased; God knows, if I might choose

I would not be more troubled with her love.

Her love is like a briar that rasps the flesh,

And yours is soft like flowers. Come this way, love;

So, further in this window; hark you here.

Enter CHASTELARD.

MARY BEATON.

Good morrow, sir.

CHASTELARD.

Good morrow, noble lady.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

You have heard no news? what news?

CHASTELARD.

Nay, I have none.

That maiden-tongued male-faced Elizabeth Hath eyes unlike our queen's, hair not so soft,

And hands more sudden save for courtesy; And lips no kiss of love's could bring to flower

In such red wise as our queen's; save this news,

I know none English.

MARY SEATON.

Come, no news of her;

For God's love talk still rather of our queen.

MARY BEATON.

God give us grace then to speak well of her.

You did right joyfully in our masque last night;

I saw you when the queen lost breath (her head

Bent back, her chin and lips catching the air—

A goodly thing to see her) how you smiled Across her head, between your lips—no doubt

You had great joy, sir. Did not you take note

Once how one lock fell? that was good to see.

CHASTELARD.

Yea, good enough to live for.

MARY BEATON.

Nay, but sweet
Enough to die. When she broke off the
dance,
Turning round short and soft—I never
saw
Such supple ways of walking as she has.

CHASTELARD.

Why do you praise her gracious looks to me?

MARY BEATON.

Sir, for mere sport: but tell me even for
love
How much you love her.

CHASTELARD.

I know not: it may be
If I had set mine eyes to find that out,
I should not know it. She hath fair eyes:
may be

I love her for sweet eyes or brows or hair,
For the smooth temples, where God
touching her

Made blue with sweeter veins the flower-
sweet white;

Or for the tender turning of her wrist,
Or marriage of the eyelid with the cheek;
I cannot tell; or flush of lifting throat,
I know not if the color get a name
This side of heaven—no man knows; or her
mouth,

A flower's lip with a snake's lip, stinging
sweet,

And sweet to sting with: face that one
would see

And then fall blind and die with sight of it
Held fast between the eyelids—oh, all
these

And all her body and the soul to that,
The speech and shape and hand and foot
and heart

That I would die of—yea, her name that
turns

My face to fire being written—I know no
whit

How much I love them.

MARY BEATON.

Nor how she loves you back?

CHASTELARD.

I know her ways of loving, all of them:

A sweet soft way the first is; afterward
It burns and bites like fire; the end of that,
Charred dust, and eyelids bitten through
with smoke.

MARY BEATON.

What has she done for you to gird at her?

CHASTELARD.

Nothing. You do not greatly love her,
you,

Who do not—gird, you call it. I am
bound to France;

Shall I take word from you to any one?
So it be harmless, not a gird, I will.

MARY BEATON.

I doubt you will not go hence with your
life.

CHASTELARD.

Why, who should slay me? no man north-
wards born,

In my poor mind; my sword's lip is no
maid's

To fear the iron biting of their own,
Though they kiss hard for hate's sake.

MARY BEATON.

Lo you, sir,
How sharp he whispers, what close breath
and eyes—

And hers are fast upon him, do you see?

CHASTELARD.

Well, which of these must take my life in
hand?

Pray God it be the better: nay, which
hand?

MARY BEATON.

I think, none such. The man is goodly
made;

She is tender-hearted toward his courtesies,
And would not have them fall too low to
find.

Look, they slip forth.

Exeunt DARNLEY and MARY HAMILTON.

MARY SEYTON.

For love's sake, after them,
And soft as love can.

*Exeunt MARY CARMICHAEL and MARY
SEYTON.*

CHASTELARD.

True, a goodly man,
What shapeliness and state he hath, what
eyes,

Brave brow and lordly lip! were it not fit
Great queens should love him?

MARY BEATON.

See you now, fair lord,
I have but scant breath's time to help
myself,
And I must cast my heart out on a chance;
So bear with me. That we twain have
loved well,

I have no heart nor wit to say; God wot
We had never made good lovers, you
and I.

Look you, I would not have you love me,
sir,

For all the love's sake in the world. I
say,

You love the queen, and loving burns you
up,

And mars the grace and joyous wit you
had,

Turning your speech to sad, your face to
strange,

Your mirth to nothing: and I am piteous, I,
Even as the queen is, and such women
are;

And if I helped you to your love-longing,
Meseems some grain of love might fall my
way

And love's god help me when I came to
love;

I have read tales of men that won their
loves

On some such wise.

CHASTELARD.

If you mean mercifully,
I am bound to you past thought and thank;
if worse,
I will but thank your lips and not your
heart.

MARY BEATON.

Nay, let love wait and praise me, in God's
name,

Some day when he shall find me; yet, God
wot,

My lips are of one color with my heart.

Withdraw now from me, and about mid-
night

In some close chamber without light or
noise

It may be I shall get you speech of her;
She loves you well; it may be she will
speak,

I wot not what; she loves you at her heart.

Let her not see that I have given you
word,

Lest she take shame and hate her love.
Till night.

Let her not see it.

CHASTELARD.

I will not thank you now,
And then I'll die what sort of death you
will.

Farewell. [Exit.

MARY BEATON.

And by God's mercy and my love's
I will find ways to earn such thank of you.
[Exit.

SCENE II.—*A Hall in the same.*

*The QUEEN, DARNLEY, MURRAY, RAN-
DOLPH, the MARIES, CHASTELARD, &c.*

QUEEN.

Hath no man seen my lord of Chastelard?
Nay, no great matter. Keep you on that
side:

Begin the purpose.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Madam, he is here.

QUEEN.

Begin a measure now that other side.
I will not dance; let them play soft a little.
Fair sir, we had a dance to tread to-night,
To teach our north folk all sweet ways of
France;

But at this time we have no heart to it.
Sit, sir, and talk. Look, this breast-clasp
is new,

The French king sent it me.

CHASTELARD.

A goodly thing:
But what device? the word is ill to catch.

QUEEN.

A Venus crowned, that eats the hearts of
men:

Below her flies a love with a bat's wings,
And strings the hair of paramours to bind
Live birds' feet with. Lo what small subtle
work:

The smith's name, Gian Crisostomo da—
what?

Can you read that? The sea froths under-
foot;

She stands upon the sea and it curls up

Between the sea-strand and the sea
 Love fell on sleep, sleep fell on me ;
 The first star saw twain turn to one
 Between the moonrise and the sun ;
 The next, that saw not love, saw me
 Between the sea-banks and the sea.

QUEEN.

Lo, sirs,

What mirth is here ! Some song of yours
 fair lord.

You know glad ways of rhyming—no such
 .unes

As go to tears.

CHASTELARD.

I made this yesterday ;
 For its love's sake I pray you let it live.
 [He sings.

1.

Après tant de jours, après tant de pleurs,
 Soyez secourable a mon âme en peine.
 Voyez comme Avril fait l'amour aux fleurs ;
 Dame d'amour, dame aux belles couleurs,
 Dieu vous a fait belle, Amour vous fait
 reine.

2.

Rions, je t'en prie ; aimons, je le veux.
 Le temps fuit et rit et ne revient guère.
 Pour baiser le bout de tes blonds cheveux,
 Pour baiser tes cils, ta bouch et tes yeux ;
 L'amour n'a qu'un jour auprès de sa mère.

QUEEN.

'Tis a true song ; love shall not pluck time
 back

Nor time lie down with love. For me I am
 old ;

Have you no hair changed since you
 changed to Scot ?

I look each day to see my face drawn up
 About the eyes, as if they sucked the
 cheeks.

I think this air and face of things here
 north

Puts snow at flower-time in the blood, and
 tears

Between the sad eyes and the merry mouth
 In their youth-days.

CHASTELARD.

It is a bitter air.

QUEEN.

Faith, if I might be gone, sir, would I
 stay ?

I think, for no mans' love's sake.

CHASTELARD.

I think not.

QUEEN.

Do you not mind at landing how the quay
 Looked like a blind wet face in waste of
 wind

And washing of wan waves ? how the hard
 mist

Made the hills ache ? your songs lied loud,
 my knight,

They said my face would burn off cloud and
 rain

Seen once, and filled the crannied land
 with fire,

Kindle their capes in their blind black-grey
 hoods—

I know not what. You praise me past all
 loves ;

And these men love me a little ; 'tis some
 fault,

I think to love me : even a fool's sweet
 fault.

I have your verse still beating in my head
 Of how the swallow got a wing broken

In the spring time and lay upon his side
 Watching the rest fly off i' the red leaf-

time,
 And broke his heart with grieving at himself

Before the snow came. Do you know that
 lord

With sharp-set eyes ? and him with huge
 thewed throat !

Good friends to me ; I had need love them
 well.

Why do you look one way ? I will not have
 you

Keep your eyes here : 'tis no great wit in me
 To care much now for old French friends
 of mine.—

Come, a fresh measure ; come, play well
 for me,

Fair sirs, your playing puts life in foot and
 heart.—

DARNLEY.

Lo you again, sirs, how she laughs and
 leans,

Holding him fast—the supple way she
 hath !

Your queen hath none such; better as
she is

For all her measures, a grave English
maid,

Than queen of snakes and Scots.

RANDOLPH.

She is over fair

To be so sweet and hurt not. A good
knight;

Goodly to look on.

MURRAY.

Yea, a good sword too,

And of good kin; too light of loving
though;

These jangling song-smiths are keen love-
mongers,

They snap at all meats.

DARNLEY.

What ! by God I think,

For all his soft French face and bright
boy's sword,

There be folks fairer: and for knightliness,
These hot-lipped brawls of Paris breed
sweet knights—

Mere stabbers for a laugh across the wine.—

QUEEN.

There, I have danced you down for once,
fair lord;

You look pale now. Nay then for courtesy
I must needs help you; do not bow your
head,

I am tall enough to reach close under it.

[*Kisses him.*]

Now come, we'll sit and see this passage
through.—

DARNLEY.

A courtesy, God help us ! courtesy—

Pray God it wound not where it should
heal wounds.

Why, there was here last year some lord of
France

(Priest on the wrong side as some folk are
prince)

Told tales of Paris ladies—nay, by God,
No jest for queen's lips to catch laughter of
That would keep clean; I wot he made
good mirth,

But she laughed over sweetly, and in such
wise—

Nay, I laughed too, but lothly.—

QUEEN.

How they look !

The least thing courteous galls them to the
bone.

What would one say now I were thinking
of?

CHASTELARD.

It seems, some sweet thing.

QUEEN.

True, a sweet one, sir—

That madigral you made Alys de Saulx
Of the three ways of love; the first kiss
honor,

The second pity, and the last kiss love.

Which think you now was that I kissed you
with?

CHASTELARD.

It should be pity, if you be pitiful;

For I am past all honoring that keep

Outside the eye of battle, where my kin

Fallen overseas have found this many a
day

No helm of mine between them; and for
love,

I think of that as dead men of good days
Ere the wrong side of death was theirs,
when God

Was friends with them.

QUEEN.

Good; call it pity then.

You have a subtle riddling skill at love

Which is not like a lover. For my part,

I am resolved to be well done with love,

Though I were fairer-faced than all the
world;

As there be fairer. Think you, fair my
knight,

Love shall live after life in any man ?

I have given you stuff for riddles.

CHASTELARD.

Most sweet queen,

They say men dying remember, with sharp
joy

And rapid reluctance of desire,

Some old thing, some swift breath of wind,
some word,

Some sword-stroke or dead lute-strain,
some lost sight,

Some sea-blossom stripped to the sun and
burned

At naked ebb—some river-flower that
breathes
Against the stream like a swooned swim-
mer's mouth—
Some tear or laugh ere lip and eye were
man's—
Sweet stings that struck the blood in riding
—nay
Some garment or sky-colour or spice-smell,
And die with heart and face shut fast on it,
And know not why, and weep not; it may
be
Men shall hold love fast always in such
wise
in new fair lives where all are new things
else,
And know not why, and weep not.

QUEEN.

A right rhyme,
And right a rhyme's worth: nay, a sweet
song, though.
What, shall my cousin hold fast that love
of his,
Her face and talk, when life ends? as God
grant
His life end late and sweet; I love him
well.
She is fair enough, his lover; a fair-faced
maid,
With grey sweet eyes and tender touch of
talk;
And that, God wot, I wist not. See you,
sir,
Men say I needs must get wed hastily;
Do none point lips at him?

CHASTELARD.

Yea, guessingly.

QUEEN.

God help such lips! and get me leave to
laugh!
What should I do but paint and put him
up
Like a gilt god, a saintship in a shrine,
For all fools' feast? God's mercy on men's
wits!
Tall as a housetop and as bare of brain—
I'll have no staffs with fool-faced carven
heads
To hang my life on. Nay, for love, no
more,
For fear I laugh and set their eyes on edge
To find out why I laugh. Good night,
fair lords;

Bid them cease playing. Give me your
hand; good night.

SCENE III.—MARY BEATON's Chamber :
night.

Enter CHASTELARD.

CHASTELARD.

I am not certain yet she will not come;
For I can feel her hand's heat still in mine,
Past doubting of, and see her brows half
drawn,
And half a light in the eyes. If she come
not,
I am no worse than he that dies to-night.
This two years' patience gets an end at
least,
Whichever way I am well done with it.
How hard the thin sweet moon is, split and
laced
And latticed over, just a stray of it
Catching and clinging at a strip of wall,
Hardly a hand's breadth. Did she turn
indeed
In going out? not to catch up her gown
The page let slip, but to keep sight of me?
There was a soft small stir beneath her eyes
Hard to put on, a quivering of her blood
That knew of the old nights watched out
wakefully.
Those measures of her dancing too were
changed—
More swift and with more eager stops at
whiles
And rapid pauses where breath failed her
lips.

Enter MARY BEATON.

O, she is come: if you be she indeed
Let me but hold your hand; what, no word
yet?
You turn and kiss me without word; O
sweet,
If you will slay me be not over quick,
Kill me with some slow heavy kiss that
plucks
The heart out at the lips. Alas! sweet
love,
Give me some old sweet word to kiss away.
Is it a jest? for can I feel your hair
Touch me—I may embrace your body too?
I know you well enough without sweet
words.
How should one make you speak? This
is not she.

Come in the light; nay, let me see your eyes.

Ah, you it is? what have I done to you?
And do you look now to be slain for this
That you twist back and shudder like one
stabbed?

MARY BEATON.

Yea, kill me now and do not look at me:
God knows I meant to die. Sir, for God's
love

Kill me now quick ere I go mad with
shame.

CHASTELARD.

Cling not upon my wrists: let go the hilt:
Nay, you will bruise your hand with it:
stand up:

You shall not have my sword forth.

MARY BEATON.

Kill me now,
I will not rise: there, I am patient, see,
I will not strive, but kill me for God's
sake.

CHASTELARD.

Pray you rise up and be not shaken so:
Forgive me my rash words, my heart was
gone

After the thing you were: be not ashamed;
Give me the shame, you have no part in it;
Can I not say a word shall do you good?
Forgive that too.

MARY BEATON.

I shall run crazed with shame;
But when I felt your lips catch hold on
mine
It 'stopped my breath: I would have told
you all;
Let me go out: you see I lied to you,
And I am shamed; I pray you loose me,
sir,
Let me go out.

CHASTELARD.

Think no base things of me:
I were most base to let you go ashamed.
Think my heart's love and honor go with
you:

Yea, while I live, for your love's noble
sake,

I am your servant in what wise may be,
To love and serve you with right thankful
heart.

MARY BEATON.

I have given men leave to mock me, and
must bear

What shame they please: you have good
cause to mock.

Let me pass now.

CHASTELARD.

You know I mock you not.
If ever I leave off to honor you,
God give me shame! I were the worst
churl born.

MARY BEATON.

No marvel though the queen should love
you too,

Being such a knight. I pray you for her
love,

Lord Chastelard, of your great courtesy,
Think now no scorn to give me my last
kiss

That I shall have of man before I die.
Even the same lips you kissed and knew
not of

Will you kiss now, knowing the shame of
them,

And say no one word to me afterwards,
That I may see I have loved the best
lover

And man most courteous of all men alive?

MARY SEYTON (*within*).

Here, fetch the light: nay, this way; enter
all.

MARY BEATON.

I am twice undone. Fly, get some hiding,
sir;

They have spied upon me somehow.

CHASTELARD.

Nay, fear not;
Stand by my side.

Enter MARY SEYTON *and* MARY HAMIL-
TON.

MARY HAMILTON.

Give me that light: this way.

CHASTELARD.

What jest is here, fair ladies? it walks
late.

Something too late for laughing.

MARY SEYTON.

Nay, fair sir,

What jest is this of yours? Look to your lady:

She is nigh swooned. The queen shall know all this.

MARY HAMILTON.

A grievous shame it is we are fallen upon;
Hold forth the light. Is this your care of us?

Nay, come, look up: this is no game, God wot.

CHASTELARD.

Shame shall befall them that speak shamefully:

I swear this lady is as pure and good
As any maiden, and who believes me not
Shall keep the shame for his part and the lie.

To them that come in honor and not in hate

I will make answer. Lady, have good heart.

Give me the light there: I will see you forth.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

DARNLEY.

SCENE I.—*The great Chamber in Holywood.*

The QUEEN and MARY SEYTON.

QUEEN.

But will you swear it?

MARY SEYTON.

Swear it, madam?

QUEEN.

Ay—

Swear it.

MARY SEYTON.

Madam, I am not friends with them.

QUEEN.

Swear then against them if you are not friends.

MARY SEYTON.

Indeed I saw them kiss.

QUEEN.

So lovers use—

What, their mouths close? a goodly way of love!

Or but the hands? or on her throat? Prithee—

You have sworn that.

MARY SEYTON.

I say what I saw done.

QUEEN.

Ay, you did see her cheeks (God smite them red!)

Kissed either side? what, they must eat strange food,

Those singing lips of his?

MARY SEYTON.

Sweet meat enough—

They started at my coming five yards off,
But there they were.

QUEEN.

A maid may have kissed cheeks

And no shame in them—yet one would not swear.

You have sworn that. Pray God he be not mad:

A sickness in his eyes. The left side love (I was told that) and the right courtesy.

'Tis good fools' fashion. What, no more but this?

For me, God knows I am no whit wroth; not I;

But, for your fame's sake that her shame will sting,

I cannot see a way to pardon her—

For your fame's sake, lest that be prated of.

MARY SEYTON.

Nay, if she were not chaste—I have not said

She was not chaste.

QUEEN.

I know you are tender of her;

And your sweet word will hardly turn her sweet,

MARY SEYTON.

Indeed I would fain do her any good.

Shall I not take some gracious word to her?

QUEEN.

Bid her not come or wait on me to-day.

MARY SEYTON.

Will you see him?

QUEEN.

See—O, this Chastelard?

He doth not well to sing maids into shame;
And folk are sharp here; yet for sweet
friend's sake

Assuredly I'll see him. I am not wroth.
A goodly man, and a good sword thereto—
It may be he shall wed her. I am not
wroth.

MARY SEYTON.

Nay, though she bore with him, she hath
no great love,
I doubt me, that way.

QUEEN.

God mend all, I pray—
And keep us from all wrongdoing and wild
words.

I think there is no fault men fall upon
But I could pardon. Look you, I would
swear

She were no paramour for any man,
So well I love her.

MARY SEYTON.

Am I to bid him in?

QUEEN.

As you will, sweet. But if you held me
hard
You did me grievous wrong. Doth he wait
there?

Men call me over tender; I had rather so,
Than too ungracious. Father, what with
you?

Enter FATHER BLACK.

FATHER BLACK.

God's peace and health of soul be with the
queen?
And pardon be with me though I speak
truth.

As I was going on peaceable men's wise
Through your good town, desiring no man
harm,

A kind of shameful woman with thief's lips
Spake somewhat to me over a thrust-out
chin,

Soliciting as I deemed an alms; which alms
(Remembering what was writ of Magdalen)
I gave not grudging but with pure good
heart,

When lo some scurril children that lurked
near,

Set there by Satan for my stumbling-stone,
Fell hooting with necks thwart and eyes
asquint,

Screeched and made horns and shot out
tongues at me,

As at my Lord the Jews shot out their
tongues

And made their heads wag; I considering
this

Took up my cross in patience and passed
forth:

Nevertheless one ran between my feet
And made me totter, using speech and
signs

I smart with shame to think of: then my
blood

Kindled, and I was moved to smite the
knave,

And the knave howled; whereat the lewd
whole herd

Brake forth upon me and cast mire and
stones

So that I ran sore risk of bruise or gash
If they had touched; likewise I heard men
say,

(Their foul speech missed not of mine ear)
they cried,

"This devil's mass-priest hankers for new
flesh

Like a dry hound; let him seek such at
home,

Snuff and smoke out the queen's French—"

QUEEN.

They said that?

FATHER BLACK.

"—French paramours that breed more
shames than sons

All her court through;" forgive me.

QUEEN.

With my heart.

Father you see the hatefulness of these—
They loathe us for our love. I am not
moved:

What should I do being angry? By this
hand

(Which is not big enough to bruise their
lips),

I marvel what thing should be done with me
To make me wroth. We must have patience
with us

When we seek thank of men.

FATHER BLACK.

Madam, farewell ;
I pray God keep you in such patient heart.
[Exit.

QUEEN.

Let him come now.

MARY SEYTON.

Madam, he is at hand. [Exit.

Enter CHASTELARD.

QUEEN.

Give me that broidery frame; how gone so soon?

No maid about? Reach me some skein of silk.

What, are you come, fair lord? Now by my life

That lives here idle, I am right glad of you; I have slept so well and sweet since yesterday

It seems our dancing put me in glad heart. Did you sleep well?

CHASTELARD.

Yea, as a man may sleep.

QUEEN.

You smile as if I jested; do not men sleep as we do? Had you fair dreams in the night?

For me—but I should fret you with my dreams—

I dreamed sweet things. You are good at sooth-saying:

Make me a sonnet of my dream.

CHASTELARD.

I will,

When I shall know it.

QUEEN.

I thought I was asleep
In Paris, lying by my lord, and knew
In some wise he was well awake, and yet
I could not wake too; and I seemed to know

He hated me, and the least breath I made
Would turn somehow to slay or stifle me.
Then in brief time he rose and went away,
Saying, *Let her dream, but when her dream is out*

I will come back and kill her as she wakes.
And I lay sick and trembling with sore fear,

And still I knew that I was deep asleep;

And thinking *I must dream now, or I die,*
God send me some good dream lest I be slain,

Fell fancying one had bound my feet with cords

And bade me dance, and the first measure made

I fell upon my face and wept for pain:

And my cords broke, and I began the dance

To a bitter tune; and he that danced with me

Was clothed in black with long red lines and bars

And masked down to the lips, but by the chin

I knew you though your lips were sewn up close

With scarlet thread all dabbled wet in blood.

And then I knew the dream was not for good.

And striving with sore travail to reach up
And kiss you (you were taller in my dream)
I missed your lips and woke.

CHASTELARD.

Sweet dreams, you said?

An evil dream I hold it for, sweet love. —

QUEEN.

You call love sweet; yea, what is bitter, then?

There's nothing broken sleep could hit upon

So bitter as the breaking down of love.

You call me sweet; I am not sweet to you,
Nor you—O, I would say not sweet to me,
And if I said so I should hardly lie.

But there have been those things between us, sir,

That men call sweet.

CHASTELARD.

I know not how *There is*
Turns to There hath been; 'tis a heavier change

Than change of flesh to dust. Yet though years change

And good things end and evil things grow great,

The old love that was, or that was dreamed about,

That sang and kissed and wept upon itself,

Laughed and ran mad with love of its own
face,
That was a sweet thing.

QUEEN.

Nay, I know not well.
'Tis when the man is held fast under-
ground
They say for sooth what manner of heart
he had.
We are alive, and cannot be well sure
If we loved much or little: think you not
It were convenient one of us should die?

CHASTELARD.

Madam, your speech is harsh to understand.

QUEEN.

Why, there could come no change then;
one of us
Would never need to fear our love might
turn
To the sad thing that it may grow to be.
I would sometimes all things were dead
asleep
That I have loved, all buried in soft beds
And sealed with dreams and visions, and
each dawn
Sung to by sorrows, and all nights assuaged
By short sweet kisses and by sweet long
loves
For old life's sake, lest weeping overmuch
Should wake them in a strange new time,
and arm
Memory's blind hand to kill forgetfulness.

CHASTELARD.

Look, you dream still, and sadly.

QUEEN.

Sooth, a dream;
For such things died or lied in sweet love's
face,
And I forget them not, God help my wit!
I would the whole world were made up of
sleep
And life not fashioned out of lies and
loves.
We foolish women have such times, you
know,
When we are weary or afraid or sick
For perfect nothing.

CHASTELARD (*aside*).

Nor would one be fain
To know what bitter or what dangerous
thing
M

She thinks of, softly chafing her soft lip.
She must mean evil.

QUEEN.

Are you sad too, sir,
That you say nothing?

CHASTELARD.

I? not sad a jot—
Though this your talk might make a blithe
man sad.

QUEEN.

O me! I must not let stray sorrows out;
They are ill to fledge, and if they feel
blithe air
They wail and chirp untunefully. Would
God
I had been a man! when I was born, men
say,
My father turned his face and wept to think
I was no man.

CHASTELARD.

Will you weep too?

QUEEN.

In sooth,
If I were man I should be no base man;
I could have fought; yea, I could fight now
too
If men would shew me; I would I were
the king!
I should be all ways better than I am.

CHASTELARD.

Nay, would you have more honour, having
this—
Men's hearts and loves and the sweet spoil
of souls
Given you like simple gold to bind your
hair?
Say you were king of thews, not queen of
souls,
An iron headpiece hammered to a head,
You might fail too.

QUEEN.

No, then I would not fail,
Or God should make me woman back
again,
To be King James—you hear men say
King James
The word sounds like a piece of gold thrown
down,
Rings with a round and royal note in it—
A name to write good record of; this king

Fought here and there, was beaten such a day,
And came at last to a good end, his life
Being all lived out, and for the main part well

And like a king's life; then to have men say

(As now they say of Flodden, here they broke

And there they held up to the end) years back

They saw you—*yea, I saw the king's face*
heimed

Red in the hot lit foreground of some fight
Hold the whole war as it were by the bit, a
horse

Fit for his knees' grip—the great rearing
war

That frothed with lips flung up, and shook
men's lives

Off either flank of it like snow; I saw
(You could not hear as his sword rang),
saw him

Shout, laugh, smite straight, and flaw the
riven ranks,

Move as the wind moves, and his horse's
feet

Stripe their long flags with dust. Why, if
one died,

To die so in the heart and heat of war
Were a much goodlier thing than living

soft

And speaking sweet for fear of men. Woe's me,

Is there no way to pluck this body off?

Then I should never fear a man again,
Even in my dreams I should not; no, by

heaven.

CHASTELARD.

I never thought you did fear anything.

QUEEN.

God knows I do; I could be sick with
wrath

To think what grievous fear I have 'twixt
whiles

Of mine own self and of base men: last
night

If certain lords were glancing where I was
Under the eyelid, with sharp lip and brow,

I tell you, for pure shame and fear of them,
I could have gone and slain them.

CHASTELARD.

Verily,

You are changed since those good days
that fell in France;

But yet I think you are not so changed at
heart

As to fear man.

QUEEN.

I would I had no heed.

Lend me your sword a little; a fair sword;
I see the fingers that I hold it with

Clear in the blade, bright pink, the shell-
color,

Brighter than flesh is really, curved all
round.

Now men would mock if I should wear it
here,

Bound under bosom with a girdle, here.
And yet I have heart enough to wear it well,

Speak to me like a woman, let me see
If I can play at man.

CHASTELARD.

God save King James!

QUEEN.

Would you could change now! Fie, this
will not do;

Unclasp your sword; nay, the hilt hurts
my side;

It sticks fast here. Unbind this knot for
me:

Stoop, and you'll see it closer; thank you:
there.

Now I can breathe, sir. Ah! it hurts me,
though:

This was fool's play.

CHASTELARD.

Yea, you are better so.

Without the sword; your eyes are stronger
things,

Whether to save or slay.

QUEEN.

Alas, my side! T

It hurts right sorely. Is it not pitiful
Our souls shall be so bound about with
flesh

Even when they leap and smite with wings
and feet

The least pain plucks them back, puts out
their eyes,

Turns them to tears and words? Ah my
sweet knight,

You have the better of us that weave and
weep

While the blithe battle blows upon your eyes

Like rain and wind; ye! I remember too
When this last year the fight at Corrichie
Reddened the rushes with stained fen-water,
I rode with my good men and took delight,
Feeling the sweet clear wind upon my eyes
And rainy soft smells blown upon my face
In riding; then the great fight jarred and
joined,

And the sound stung me right through
heart and all;

Fer I was here, see, gazing off the hills,
In the wet air; our housings were all wet,
And not a plume stood stiffly past the ear
But flapped between the bridle and the
neck;

And under us we saw the battle go
Like running water; I could see by fits
Some helm the rain fell shining off, some
flag

Snap from the staff, shorn through or
broken short

In the man's falling; yea, one seemed to
catch

The very grasp of tumbled men at men.
Teeth clenched in throats, hands riveted in
hair,

Tearing the life out with no help of swords.
And all the clamor seemed to shine, the
light

Seemed to shout as a man doth; twice I
laughed—

I tell you, twice my heart swelled out with
thirst

To be into the battle; see, fair lord,
I swear it seemed I might have made a
knight,

And yet the simple bracing of a belt
Makes me cry out; this is too pitiful,
This dusty half of us made up with fears.—

Have you been ever quite so glad to fight
As I have thought men must? pray you,
speak truth.

CHASTELARD.

Yea, when the time came, there caught
hold of me

Such pleasure in the head and hands and
blood

As may be kindled under loving lips:
Crossing the ferry once to the Clerk's
Field,

I mind me how the plashing noise of
Seine

Put fire into my face for joy, and how
My blood kept measure with the swinging
boat

Till we touched land, all for the sake of
that

Which should be soon.

QUEEN.

Her name, for God's love, sir;
You slew your friend for love's sake? nay,
the name.

CHASTELARD.

Faith, I forget.

QUEEN.

Now by the faith I have
You have no faith to swear by.

CHASTELARD.

A good sword:
We left him quiet after a thrust or twain.

QUEEN.

I would I had been at hand and marked
them off
As the maids did when we played singing
games:

You outwent me at rhyming; but for faith,
We fight best there. I would I had seen
you fight.

CHASTELARD.

I would you had: his play was worth an
eye;

He made some gallant way before that pass
Which made me way through him.

QUEEN.

Would I saw that—
How did you slay him?

CHASTELARD.

A clean pass—this way;
Right in the side here, where the blood
has root.

His wrist went round in pushing, see you,
thus,

Or he had pierced me.

QUEEN.

Yea, I see, sweet knight.
I have a mind to love you for his sake;
Would I had seen.

CHASTELARD.

Hugues de Marsillac—
I have the name now; 'twas a goodly one

Before he changed it for a dusty name.

QUEEN.

Talk not of death; I would hear living talk
Of good live swords and good strokes
struck withal,
Brave battles and the mirth of mingling
men,
Not of cold names you greet a dead man
with.
You are yet young for fighting; but in fight
Have you never caught a wound.

CHASTELARD.

Yea, twice or so:
The first time in a little outlying field
(My first field) at the sleepy grey of dawn,
They found us drowsy, fumbling at our
girths,
And rode us down by heaps; I took a hurt
Here in the shoulder.

QUEEN

Ah, I mind well now:

Did you not ride a day's space afterward,
Having two wounds? yea, Dandelot it was,
That Dandelot took word of it. I know,
Sitting at meat when the news came to us
I had nigh swooned but for those Florence
eyes

Slanting my way with sleek lids drawn up
close—

Yea, and she said, the Italian brokeress,
She said such men were good for great
queens' love.

I would you might die, when you come to
die,

Like a knight slain. Pray God we make
good ends.

For love too, love dies hard or easily,
But some way dies on some day, ere we
die.

CHASTELARD.

You made a song once of old flowers and
loves,
Will you not sing that rather? 'tis long
gone
Since you sang last.

QUEEN.

I had rather sigh than sing
And sleep than sigh; 'tis long since verily,
But I will once more sing; ay, thus it was.

[Sings.

1.

J'ai vu faner bien des choses,
Mainte feuille aller au vent.
En songeant aux vieilles roses,
J'ai pleuré souvent.

2.

Vois-tu dans les roses mortes
Amour qui sourit caché?
O mon amant, à nos portes
L'as-tu vu couché?

3.

As-tu vu jamais au monde
Vénus chasser et courir?
Fille de l'onde, avec l'onde
Doit-elle mourir?

4.

Aux jours de neige et de givre
L'amour s'effeuille et s'endort;
Avec mai doit-il revivre,
On bien est-il mort?

5.

Qui sait ou s'en vont les roses?
Qui sait ou s'en va le vent?
En songeant à telles choses,
J'ai pleuré souvent.

I never heard yet but love made good
knights,

But for pure faith, by Mary's holiness,
I think she lies about men's lips asleep,
And if one kiss or pluck her by the hand
To wake her, why God help your woman's
wit,

Faith is but dead; dig her grave deep at
heart,

And hide her face with cerecloths; fare-
well faith.

Would I could tell why I talk idly. Look,
Here come my riddle-readers. Welcome
all;

Enter MURRAY, DARNLEY, RANDOLPH,
LINDSAY, MORTON, *and other* LORDS.

Sirs, be right welcome. Stand you by my
side,

Fair cousin, I must lean on love or fall;
You are a goodly staff, sir; tall enough,
And fair enough to serve. My gentle lords,

I am full glad of God that in great grace
He hath given me such a lordly stay as
this;

There is no better friended queen alive.
For the repealing of those banished men
That stand in peril yet of last year's fault,
It is our will; you have our seal to that.
Brother, we hear harsh bruits of bad report
Blown up and down about our almoner;
See you to this: let him be sought into:
They say lewd folk make ballads of their
spleen,
Strew miry ways of words with talk of
him;
If they have cause let him be spoken with.

LINDSAY.

Madam, they charge him with so rank a
life
Were it not well this fellow were plucked
out—
Seeing this is not an eye that doth offend
But a blurred glass it were no harm to
break;
Yea rather it were gracious to be done?

QUEEN.

Let him be weighed, and use him as he is;
I am of my nature pitiful, ye know,
And cannot turn my love unto a thorn
In so brief space. Ye are all most virtuous;
Yea, there is goodness grafted on this land;
But yet compassion is some part of God.
There is much heavier business held on
hand

Than one man's goodness: yea, as things
fare here,
A matter worth more weighing. All you
wot

I am to choose a help to my weak feet,
A laup before my face, a lord and friend
To walk with me in weary ways, high up
Between the wind and rain and the hot
sun.

Now I have chosen a helper to myself,
I wot the best a woman ever won;
A man that loves me, and a royal man,
A goodly love and lord for any queen.
But for the peril and despite of men
I have sometimes tarried and withheld my-
self,

Not fearful of his worthiness nor you,
But with some lady's loathing to let out
My whole heart's love; for truly this is
hard,

Not like a woman's fashion, shamefaced-
ness

And noli grave reluctance of herself
To be the tongue and cry of her own heart.
Nathless plain speech is better than much
wit,

So ye shall bear with me; albeit I think
Ye have caught the mark whereat my heart
is bent.

I have kept close counsel and shut up men's
lips,

But lightly shall a woman's will slip out,
The foolish little winged will of her,
Through cheek or eye when tongue is
charmed asleep.

For that good lord I have good will to wed,
I wot he knew long since which way it
flew,

Even till it lit on his right wrist and sang.
Lo, here I take him by the hand: fair lords,
This is my kinsman, made of mine own
blood,

I take to halve the state and services
That bow down to me, and to be my head,
My chief, my master, my sweet lord and
king.

Now shall I never say "sweet cousin"
more

To my dear head and husband; here, fair
sir,

I give you all the heart of love in me
To gather off my lips. Did it like you,
The taste of it? sir, it was whole and true.
God save our king!

DARNLEY.

Nay, nay, sweet love, no lord;
No king of yours though I were lord of
these.

QUEEN.

Let word be sent to all good friends of ours
To help us to be glad; England and France
Shall bear great part of our rejoicings up.
Give me your hand, dear lord; for from
this time

I must not walk alone. Lords, have good-
cheer:

For you shall have a better face than mine
To set upon your kingly gold and shew
For Scotland's forehead in the van of things.
Go with us now, and see this news set out.

Exeunt QUEEN, DARNLEY, and LORDS.

As CHASTELARD *is going out, enter* MARY
BEATON.

MARY BEATON.

Have you yet heard? You knew of this?

CHASTELARD.

I know.

I was just thinking how such things were made

And were so fair as this is. Do you know
She held me here and talked—the most
sweet talk

Men ever heard of?

MARY BEATON.

You hate me to the heart.

What will you do?

CHASTELARD.

I know not: die some day,

But live as long and lightly as I can.

Will you now love me? faith, but if you do,
It were much better you were dead and
hearsed.

Will you do one thing for me?

MARY BEATON.

Yea, all things.

CHASTELARD.

Speak truth a little, for God's sake: indeed
It were no harm to do. Come, will you,
sweet?

Though it be but to please God.

MARY BEATON.

What will you do?

CHASTELARD.

Ay, true, I must do somewhat. Let me
see:

To get between and tread upon his face—
Catch both her hands and bid men look at
them,

How pure they were—I would do none of
these,

Though they got wedded all the days in the
year.

We may do well yet when all's come and
gone.

I pray you on this wedding night of theirs
Do but one thing that I shall ask of you,
And Darnley will not hunger as I shall
For that good time. Sweet, will you
swear me this?

MARY BEATON.

Yea: though to do it were mortal to my
soul

As the chief sin.

CHASTELARD.

I thank you: let us go.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III

THE QUEEN.

SCENE I.—*The Queen's Chamber. Night.
Lights burning in front of the bed.*

Enter CHASTELARD and MARY BEATON.

MARY BEATON.

Be tender of your feet.

CHASTELARD.

I shall not fail:

These ways have light enough to help a
man

That walks with such stirred blood in him
as mine.

MARY BEATON.

I would yet plead with you to save your
head:

Nay, let this be then: sir, I chide you not.

Nay, let all come. Do not abide her yet.

CHASTELARD.

Have you read never in French books the
song

Called the Duke's Song, some boy made
ages back,

A song of drag-nets hauled across thwart
seas

And plucked up with rent sides, and
caught therein

A strange-haired woman with sad singing
lips,

Cold in the cheek, like any stray of sea,
And sweet to touch? so that men seeing

her face,
And how she sighed out little Ahs of pain

And soft cries sobbing sideways from her
mouth,

Fell in hot love, and having lain with her
Died soon? one time I could have told it
through:

Now I have kissed the sea-witch on her
eyes

And her lips ache with it: but I shall sleep,
Full soon, and a good space of sleep.

MARY BEATON.

Alas

CHASTELARD.

What makes you sigh though I be found a fool?

You have no blame: and for my death, sweet friend,

I never could have lived long either way.

Why, as I live, the joy I have of this
Would make men mad that were not mad
with love:

I hear my blood sing, and my lifted heart
Is like a springing water blown of wind
For pleasure of this deed. Now, in God's
name,

I swear if there be danger in delight
I must die now: if joys have deadly teeth,
I'll have them bite my soul to death, and
end

In the old asp's way, Egyptian-wise; be
killed

In a royal purple fashion. Look, my love
Would kill me if my body were past hurt
Of any man's hand; and to die thereof,
I say, is sweeter than all sorts of life.

I would not have her love me now, for
then

I should die meanlier some time. I am
safe,

Sure of her face, my life's end in her sight,
My blood shed out about her feet—by
God,

My heart feels drunken when I think of it.
See you, she will not rid herself of me,
Not though she slay me: her sweet lips and
life

Will smell of my spilt blood.

MARY BEATON.

Give me good night.

CHASTELARD.

Yea, and good thanks.

[Exit MARY BEATON.]

Here is the very place:

Here has her body bowed the pillows in
And here her head thrust under made the
sheet

Smell soft of her mixed hair and spice:
even here

Her arms pushed back the coverlet, pulled
here

The golden silken curtain halfway in
It may be, and made room to lean out
loose,

Fair tender fallen arms. Now, if God
would,

Doubtless he might take pity on my soul
To give me three clear hours, and then red
hell

Snare me for ever: this were merciful:

If I were God now I should do thus much.

I must die next, and this were not so hard

For him to let me eat sweet fruit and die

With my lips sweet from it. For one shall
have

This fare for common days'-bread, which
to me

Should be a touch kept always on my
sense

To make hell soft, yea, the keen pain of
hell

Soft as the loosening of wound arms in
sleep.

Ah, love is good, and the worst part of it
More than all things but death. She will
be here

In some small while, and see me face to
face

That am to give up life for her and go

Where a man lies with all his loves put out

And his lips full of earth. I think on her,

And the old pleasure stings and makes
half-tears

Under mine eyelids. Prithee, love, come
fast,

That I may die soon; yea, some kisses
through,

I shall die joyfully enough, so God

Keep me alive till then. I feel her feet

Coming far off; now must I hold my heart,

Steadying my blood to see her patiently.

[Hides himself by the bed.]

Enter the QUEEN and DARNLEY.

QUEEN.

Nay, now go back: I have sent off my
folk,

Maries and all. Pray you, let be my hair;

I cannot twist the gold thread out of it

That you wound in so close. Look, here
it clings:

Ah! now you mar my hair unwinding it.

Do me no hurt, sir.

DARNLEY.

I would do you ease;

Let me stay here.

QUEEN.

Nay, will you go, my lord?

DARNLEY.

Eh? would you use me as a girl does
fruit,
Touched with her mouth and pulled away
for game
To look thercon ere her lips feed? but see,
By God, I fare the worse for you.

QUEEN.

Fair sir,

Give me this hour to watch with and say
prayers;
You have not faith—it needs me to say
prayers,
That with commending of this deed to
God
I may get grace for it.

DARNLEY.

Why, lacks it grace?
Is not all wedlock gracious of itself?

QUEEN.

Nay, that I know not of. Come, sweet,
be hence.

DARNLEY.

You have a sort of jewel in your neck
That's like mine here.

QUEEN.

Keep off your hands and go:
You have no courtesy to be a king.

DARNLEY.

Well, I will go; nay, but I thwart you not.
Do as you will, and get you grace; farewell.
And for my part, grace keep this watch
with me!
For I need grace to bear with you so much.

[Exit.]

QUEEN.

So, he is forth. Let me behold myself;
I am too pale to be so hot; I marvel
So little color should be bold in the face
When the blood is not quieted. I have
But a brief space to cool my thoughts upon.
If one should wear the hair thus heaped
and curled
Would it look best? or this way in the
neck?

Could one ungirdle in such wise one's heart

[Taking off her girdle.]

And ease it inwards as the waist is eased
By slackening of the slid clasp on it!

How soft the silk is—gracious color too;
Violet shadows like new veins thrown up
Each arm, and gold to fleck the faint
sweet green

Where the wrist lies thus eased I am
right glad

I have no maids about to hasten me—
So I will rest and see my hair shed down
On either silk side of my woven sleeves,
Get some new way to bind it back with—
yea,

Fair mirror-glass, I am well ware of you,
Yea, I know that, I am quite beautiful.
How my hair shines!—Fair face, be friends
with me

And I will sing to you; look in my face
Now, and your mouth must help the song
in mine.

Alys la châtelaine
Voit venir de par Seine
Thiébault le capitaine
Qui parle ainsi:

Was that the wind in the casement? nay,
no more
But the comb drawn through half my his-
sing hair
Laid on my arms—yet my flesh moved at
it.

Dans ma camaille
Plus de clou qui vaille,
Dans ma cotte-maille
Plus de fer aussi.

Ah, but I wrong the ballad-verse: what's
good
In such frayed fringes of old rhymes, to
make

Their broken burden lag with us? meseems
I could be sad now if I fell to think
The least sad thing; aye, that sweet lady's
fool,

Fool sorrow, would make merry with mine
eyes

For a small thing. Nay, but I will keep
glad,
Nor shall old sorrow be false friends with
me.

But my first wedding was not like to this—
Fair faces then and laughter and sweet
game,
And a pale little mouth that clung on mine
When I had kissed him by the faded eyes

And either thin cheek beating with faint
blood.

Well, he was sure to die soon; I do think
He would have given his body to be slain,
Having embraced my body. Now, God
knows,

I have no man to do as much for me
As give me but a little of his blood
To fill my beauty from, though I go down
Pale to my grave for want—I think not.

Pale—

I am too pale surely—Ah!

[Sees him in the glass, coming forward.]

CHASTELARD.

Be not afraid.

QUEEN.

Saint Mary! what a shaken wit have I!

Nay, is it you? who let you through the
doors?

Where be my maidens? which way got you
in?

Nay, but stand up, kiss not my hands so
hard;

By God's fair body, if you but breathe on
them

You are just dead and slain at once. What
adder

Has bit you mirthful mad? for by this
light

A man to have his head laughed off for
mirth

Is no great jest. Lay not your eyes on
me;

What, would you not be slain?

CHASTELARD.

I pray you, madam,

Pear with me a brief space and let me
speak.

I will not touch your garments even, nor
speak

But in soft wise, and look some other way,
If that it like you; for I came not here

For pleasure of the eyes; yet, if you will,
Let me look on you.

QUEEN

As you will, fair sir.

Give me that coif to gather in my hair—

I thank you—and my girdle—nay, that
side.

Speak, if you will: yet if you will be gone.

Why, you shall go, because I hate you not.

You know that I might slay you with my
lips,

With calling out? but I will hold my peace.

CHASTELARD.

Yea, do some while. I had a thing to say;
I know not wholly what thing. O my
sweet,

I am come here to take farewell of love
That I have served, and life that I have
lived

Made up of love, here in the sight of you
That all my life's time I loved more than
God,

Who quits me thus with bitter death for it.
For you well know that I must shortly die,
My life being wound about you as it is,
Who love me not; yet do not hate me,
sweet,

But tell me wherein I came short of love;
For doubtless I came short of a just love,
And fell in some fool's fault that angered
you.

Now that I talk men dig my grave for me
Out in the rain, and in a little while

I shall be thrust in some sad space of earth
Out of your eyes; and you, O you my love,
A newly-wedded lady full of mirth

And a queen girt with all good people's
love,

You shall be fair and merry in all your
days.

Is this so much for me to have of you?

Do but speak; sweet: I know these are no
words

A man should say though he were now to
die,

But I am as a child for love, and have
No strength at heart; yea, I am afraid to
die,

For the harsh dust will lie upon my face

Too thick to see you past. Look how I
love you;

I did so love you always, that your face
Seen through my sleep has wrung mine
eyes to tear

For pure delight in you. Why do you thus?
You answer not, but your lips curl in twain

And your face moves: there, I shall make
you weep

And be a coward too; it were much best
I should be slain.

QUEEN.

Yea, best such folk were slain

Why should they live to cozen fools with
lies?

You would swear now you have used me
faithfully;

Shall I not make you swear? I am ware
of you:

You will not do it; nay, for the fear of
God

You will not swear. Come, I am merciful;
God made a foolish woman, making me,
And I have loved your mistress with whole
heart;

Say you do love her, you shall marry her
And she give thanks; yet I could wish your
love

Had not so lightly chosen forth a face;
For your fair sake, because I hate you not.

CHASTELARD.

What is to say? why, you do surely know
That since my days were counted for a
man?

I have loved you; yea, how past help and
strength,

Whatever thing was bitter to my love,
I have loved you; how when I rode in war
Your face went floated in among men's
helms,

Your voice went through the shriek of
slipping swords;

Yea, and I never have loved women well,
Seeing always in my sight I had your lips
Curled over, red and sweet; and the soft
space

Of carven brows, and splendor of great
throat

Swayed lily-wise: what pleasure should one
have

To wind his arms about a lesser love?
I have seen you; why, this were joy
enough

For God's eyes up in heaven, only to see
And to come never nearer than I am.

Why, it was in my flesh, my bone and
blood,

Bound in my brain, to love you; yea, and
writ

All my heart over: if I would lie to you
I doubt I could not lie. Ah, you see now,
You know now well enough; yea, there,
sweet love,

Let me kiss there.

QUEEN.

I love you best of them.

Clasp me quite round till your lips cleave
on mine,

False mine, that did you wrong. Forgive
them dearly,

As you are sweet to them; for by love's
love

I am not that evil woman in my heart
That laughs at a rent faith. O Chastelard,
Since this was broken to me of your new
love

I have not seen the face of a sweet hour.

Nay, if there be no pardon in a man,
What shall a woman have for loving him?
Pardon me, sweet.

CHASTELARD.

Yea, so I pardon you,
And this side now; the first way. Would
God please

To slay me so! who knows how he might
please?

Now I am thinking, if you know it not,
How I might kill you, kiss your breath
clean out,

And take your soul to bring mine through
to God,

That our two souls might close and be one
twain

Or a twain one, and God himself want
skill

To set us either severally apart.

O, you must overlive me many years,
And many years my soul be in waste hell;
But when some time God can no more
refrain

To lay death like a kiss across your lips,
And great lords bear you clothed with
funeral things,

And your crown girded over deadly brows,
Then after all your happy reach of life
For pity you shall touch me with your
eyes,

Remembering love was fellow with my
flesh

Here in sweet earth, and make me well of
love

And heal my many years with piteousness.

QUEEN.

You talk too sadly and too feignedly.

CHASTELARD.

Too sad, but not too feigned; I am sad
That I shall die here without feigning thus;
And without feigning I were fain to live.

QUEEN.

Alas, you will be taken presently
And then you are but dead. Pray you get
hence.

CHASTELARD.

I will not.

QUEEN.

Nay, for God's love be away;
You will be slain and I get shame. God's
mercy!
You were stark mad to come here; kiss me,
sweet.
Oh, I do love you more than all men! yea,
Take my lips to you, close mine eyes up
fast,
So you leave hold a little; there, for pity,
Abide now, and to-morrow come to me.
Nay, lest one see red kisses in my throat—
Dear God! what shall I give you to be
gone?

CHASTELARD.

I will not go. Look, here's full night
grown up;
Why should I seek to sleep away from
here?
The place is soft and the lights burn for
sleep;
Be not you moved; I shall lie well enough.

QUEEN.

You are utterly undone. Sweet, by my
life,
You shall be saved with taking ship at
once,
For if you stay this foolish love's hour out
There is not ten days' likely life in you.
This is no choice.

* CHASTELARD.

Nay, for I will not go.

QUEEN.

O me! this is that Bayard's blood of
yours
That makes you mad; yea, and you shall
not stay.
I do not understand. Mind, you must die.
Alas, poor lord, you have no sense of me;
I shall be deadly to you.

CHASTELARD.

Yea, I saw that;

But I saw not that when my death's day
came

You could be quite so sweet to me.

QUEEN.

My love!
If I could kiss my heart's root out on you
You would taste love hid at the core of me.

CHASTELARD.

Kiss me twice more. This beautiful bowed
head
That has such hair with kissing ripples in
And shivering soft eyelashes and brows
With fluttered blood! but laugh a little,
sweetly,
That I may see your sad mouth's laughing
look
I have used sweet hours in seeing. O,
will you weep?
I pray you do not weep.

QUEEN.

Nay, dear, I have
No tears in me; I never shall weep much,
I think, in all my life; I have wept for
wrath
Sometimes and for mere pain, but for love's
pity
I cannot weep at all. I would to God
You loved me less; I give you all I can
For all this love of yours, and yet I am
sure
I shall live out the sorrow of your death
And be glad afterwards. You know I am
sorry.
I should weep now; forgive me for your
part,
God made me hard, I think. Alas, you
see
I had fain been other than I am.

CHASTELARD.

Yea, love.
Comfort your heart. What way am I to
die?

QUEEN.

Ah, will you go yet, sweet?

CHASTELARD.

No, by God's body.
You will not see? how shall I make you
see?
Look, it may be love was a sort of curse

Made for my plague and mixed up with my days
 Somewise in their beginning; or indeed
 A bitter birth begotten of sad stars
 At mine own body's birth, that heaven
 might make
 My life taste sharp where other men drank
 sweet;
 But whether in heaven body or broken
 soul,
 I know it must go on to be my death.
 There was the matter of my fate in me
 When I was fashioned first, and given such
 life
 As goes with a sad end; no fault but God's.
 Yea, and for all this I am not penitent;
 You see I am perfect in these sins of mine,
 I have my sins writ in a book to read;
 Now I shall die and be well done with this.
 But I am sure you cannot see such things,
 God knows I blame you not.

QUEEN.

What shall be said?
 You know most well that I am sorrowful.
 But you should chide me. Sweet, you
 have seen fair wars,
 Have seen men slain and ridden red in
 them;
 Why will you die a chamberer's death like
 this?
 What, shall no praise be written of my
 knight,
 For my fame's sake?

CHASTELARD.

Nay, no great praise, I think,
 I will no more; what should I do with
 death,
 Though I died goodly out of sight of you?
 I have gone once: here am I set now,
 sweet,
 Till the end come. That is your husband,
 hark,
 He knocks at the outer door. Kiss me
 just once.
 You know now all you have to say. Nay,
 love,
 Let him come quickly.

*Enter DARNLEY, and afterwards the
 MARIES.*

DARNLEY.

Yea, what thing is here?
 Ay, this was what the doors shut fast upon—

Ay, trust you to be fast at prayer, my
 sweet?

By God I have a mind——

CHASTELARD.

What mind then, sir?

A liar's lewd mind, to coin sins for jest,
 Because you take me in such wise as this?
 Look you, I have to die soon, and I swear,
 That am no liar but a free knight and lord,
 I shall die clear of any sin to you,
 Save that I came for no good will of mine;
 I am no carle, I play fair games with faith,
 And by mine honor for my sake I swear
 I say but truth; for no man's sake save
 mine,

Lest I die shamed. Madam, I pray you
 say

I am no liar; you know me what I am,
 A sinful man and shortly to be slain,
 That in a simple insolence of love
 Have stained with a fool's eyes your holy
 hours

And with a fool's words put your pity out;
 Nathless you know if I be liar or no,
 Wherefore for God's sake give me grace to
 swear

(Yea, for mine too) how past all praise you
 are

And stainless of all shame; and how all
 men

Lie, saying you are not most good and inno-
 cent,

Yea, the one thing good as God.

DARNLEY.

O sir, we know
 You can swear well, being taken; you fair
 French

Dare swallow God's name for a lewd love-
 sake

As it were water. Nay, we know, we
 know;

Save your sweet breath now lest you lack
 it soon;

We are simple, we; we have not heard of
 you.

Madam, by God you are well shamed in
 him:

Ay, trust you to be fingering in one's
 face,

Play with one's neck-chain? ah, your
 maiden's man,

A relic of your people's!

CHASTELARD.

Hold your peace,

Or I will set an edge on your own lie
 Shall scar yourself. Madam, have out your
 guard;
 'Tis time I were got hence.

QUEEN.

Sweet Hamilton,
 Hold you my hand and help me to sit
 down.

O Henry, I am beaten from my wits—
 Let me have time and live; call out my
 people—

Bring forth some armed guard to lay hold
 on him:

But see no man be slain. Sirs, hide your
 swords;

I will not have men slain.

DARNLEY.

What, is this true?

Call the queen's people—help the queen
 there you—

Ho, sirs, come in.

Enter some with the Guard

QUEEN.

Lay hold upon that man;
 Bear him away, but see he have no hurt.

CHASTELARD.

Into your hands I render up myself
 With a free heart; deal with me how you
 list,

But courteously, I pray you. Take my
 sword.

Farewell, great queen; the sweetness in
 your look

Makes life look bitter on me. Farewell,
 sirs,

[He is taken out.]

DARNLEY

Yea, pluck him forth, and have him hanged
 by dawn;

He shall find bed enow to sleep. God's
 love!

That such a knave should be a knight like
 this!

QUEEN.

Sir, peace awhile; this shall be as I please;
 Take patience to you. Lords, I pray you
 see

All be done goodly; look they wrong him
 not.

Carmichael, you shall sleep with me to-
 night;

I am sorely shaken, even to the heart.
 Fair lords,

I thank you for your care. Sweet, stay by
 me.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

MURRAY.

SCENE I.—*The Queen's Lodging at St.
 Andrew's.*

The QUEEN and the four MARIES.

QUEEN.

Why will you break my heart with praying
 to me?

You Seyton, you Carmichael, you have
 wits,

You are not all run to tears; you do not
 think

It is my wrath or will that whets this axe
 Against his neck?

MARY SEYTON.

Nay, these three weeks ago
 I said the queen's wrath was not sharp
 enough
 To shear a neck.

QUEEN.

Sweet, and you did me right,
 And look you, what my mercy bears to
 fruit.

Danger and deadly speech and a fresh fault
 Before the first was cool in people's lips;

A goodly mercy: and I wash hands of it.—
 Speak you, there; have you ever found me
 sharp?

You weep and whisper with sloped necks
 and heads

Like two sick birds; do you think shame
 of me?

Nay, I thank God none can think shame
 of me;

But am I bitter, think you, to men's faults?
 I think I am too merciful, too meek:

Why if I could I would yet save this man;
 'Tis just boy's madness; a soft stripe or two

Would do to scourge the fault in his French
 blood.

I would fain let him go. You, Hamilton,
You have a heart thewed harder than my
heart;

When mine would threat it sighs, and
wrath in it

Has a bird's flight and station, starves be-
fore

It can well feed or fly: my pulse of wrath
Sounds tender as the running down of tears.

You are the hardest woman I have known,
Your blood has frost and cruel gall in it,

You hold men off with bitter lips and eyes—
Such maidens should serve England; now,
perfay,

I doubt you would have got him slain at
once.

Come, would you not? come, would you
let him live?

MARY HAMILTON.

Yes—I think yes; I cannot tell; maybe
I would have seen him punished.

QUEEN.

Look you now,
There's maiden mercy; I would have him
live—

For all my wifehood maybe I weep too:
Here's a mere maiden falls to slaying at
once,

Small shrift for her; God keep us from such
hearts!

I am a queen too that would have him live,
But one that has no wrong and is no queen,
She would—What are you saying there,
you twain?

MARY CARMICHAEL.

I said a queen's face and so fair an one's
Would lose no grace for giving grace
away;

That gift comes back upon the mouth it
left

And makes it sweeter, and sets fresh red
on it.

QUEEN.

This comes of sonnets when the dance
draws breath;

These talking times will make a dearth of
grace.

But you—what ails you that your lips are
shut?

Weep, if you will; here are four friends of
yours

To weep as fast for pity of your tears.
Do you desire him dead? nay, but men
say

He was your friend, he fought them on
your side,

He made you songs—God knows what
songs he made!

Speak you for him a little: will you not?

MARY BEATON.

Madam, I have no words.

QUEEN.

No words? no pity—
Have you no mercies for such men? God
help!

It seems I am the meekest heart on earth—
Yea, the one tender woman left alive,
And knew it not. I will not let him live,
For all my pity of him.

MARY BEATON

Nay, but, madam,
For God's love look a little to this thing.
If you do slay him you are but shamed to
death:

All men will cry upon you, women weep,
Turning your sweet name bitter with their
tears;

Red shame grow up out of your memory
And burn his face that would speak well
of you:

You shall have no good word nor pity,
none,

Till some such end be fallen upon you:
nay,

I am but cold, I knew I had no words,
I will keep silence.

QUEEN.

Yea now, as I live,
I wish not of it; troth, he shall not die.

See you, I am pitiful, compassionate,
I would not have men slain for my love's
sake,

But if he live to do me three times wrong,
Why then my shame would grow up green
and red

Like any flower. I am not whole at heart;
In faith, I wot not what such things should
be;

I doubt it is but dangerous; he must die.

MARY BEATON.

Yea, but you will not slay him.

QUEEN.

Swear me that,
I'll say he shall not die for your oath's
sake.
What will you do for grief when he is
dead?

MARY BEATON.

Nothing for grief, but hold my peace and
die.

QUEEN.

Why, for your sweet sake one might let
him live;
But the first fault was a green seed of
shame,
And now the flower, and deadly fruit will
come
With apple-time in autumn. By my life,
I would they had slain him there in Edin-
burgh;
But I reprieve him; lo the thank I get,
To set the base folk muttering like smoked
bees
Of shame and love, and how love comes of
shame,
And how the queen loves shame that
comes of love;
Yet I say nought and go about my ways,
And this mad fellow that I respited
Being forth and free, lo now the second
time
Ye take him by my bed in wait. Now see
If I can get goodwill to pardon him;
With what a face may I crave leave of men
To respite him, being young and a good
knight
And mad for perfect love? shall I go say,
*Dear lords, because ye took him shamefully,
Let him not die; because his fault is foul,
Let him not die; because if he do live
I shall be held a harlot of all men,
I pray you, sweet sirs, that he may not die?*

MARY BEATON.

Madam, for me I would not have him live;
Mine own heart's life was ended with my
fame,
And my life's breath will shortly follow
them;
So that I care not much; for you wot well
I have lost love and shame and fame and
all
To no good end; nor while he had his life
Have I got good of him that was my love,

Save that for courtesy (which may God
quit)

He kissed me once as one might kiss for
love

Out of great pity for me; saving this,
He never did me grace in all his life.
And when you have slain him, madam, it
may be

I shall get grace of him in some new way
In a new place, if God have care of us.

QUEEN.

Bid you my brother to me presently.

[Exeunt MARIES.]

And yet the thing is pitiful; I would
There were some way. To send him over-
seas,

Out past the long firths to the cold keen
sea

Where the sharp sound is that one hears
up here—

Or hold him in strong prison till he died—
He would die shortly—or to set him free
And use him softly till his brains were
healed—

There is no way. Now never while I live
Shall we twain love together any more
Nor sit at rhyme as we were used to do,
Nor each kiss other only with the eyes
A great way off ere hand or lip could reach;
There is no way.

Enter MURRAY.

O, you are welcome, sir;
You know what need I have; but I praise
heaven,
Having such need, I have such help of you.
I do believe no queen God ever made
Was better holpen than I look to be.
What, if two brethren love not heartily,
Who shall be good to either one of them?

MURRAY.

Madam, I have great joy of your good will.

QUEEN.

I pray you, brother, use no courtesies
I have some fear you will not suffer me
When I shall speak. Fear is a fool, I
think,
Yet hath he wit enow to fool my wits,
Being but a woman's. Do not answer me
Till you shall know; yet if you have a word
I shall be fain to hear it; but I think
There is no word to help me; no man's
word;

There be two things yet that should do me good,

A speeding arm and a great heart. My lord,

I am soft-spirited as women are,
And ye wot well I have no harder heart:
Yea, with my will I would not slay a thing,
But all should live right sweetly if I might;
So that man's blood-spilling lies hard on me.

I have a work yet for mine honor's sake,
A thing to do, God wot I know not how,
Nor how to crave it of you: nay, by heaven,
I will not shame myself to show it you:
I have not heart.

MURRAY.

Why, if it may be done
With any honour, or with good men's
excuse,
I shall well do it.

QUEEN.

I would I wist that well.
Sir, do you love me?

MURRAY.

Yea, you know I do.

QUEEN.

In faith, you should well love me, for I love
The least man in your following for your sake
With a whole sister's heart.

MURRAY.

Speak simply, madam;
I must obey you, being your bounden man.

QUEEN.

Sir, so it is you know what things have been,
Even to the endangering of mine innocent name,
And by no fault, but by men's evil will;
If Chastelard have trial openly,
I am but shamed.

MURRAY.

This were a wound indeed,
If your good name should lie upon his lip.

QUEEN.

I will the judges put him not to plead,
For my fame's sake; he shall not answer them.

MURRAY.

What, think you he will speak against your fame?

QUEEN.

I know not; men might feign believe of him
For hate of me; it may be he will speak;
In brief, I will not have him held to proof.

MURRAY.

Well, if this be, what good is to be done?

QUEEN.

Is there no way but he must speak to them,
Being had to trial plainly?

MURRAY.

I think, none.

QUEEN.

Now mark, my lord; I swear he will not speak.

MURRAY.

It were the best if you could make that sure.

QUEEN.

There is one way. Look, sir, he shall not do it:
Shall not, or will not, either is one way;
I speak as I would have you understand.

MURRAY.

Let me not guess at you; speak certainly.

QUEEN.

You will not mind me: let him be removed;
Take means to get me surety: there be means.

MURRAY.

So, in your mind, I have to slay the man?

QUEEN.

Is there a mean for me to save the man?

MURRAY.

Truly I see no mean except your love.

QUEEN.

What love is that, my lord? what think you of,
Talking of love and of love's mean in me
And of your guesses and of slaying him?
Why, I say nought, have nought to say:
- God help me!
I bid you but take surety of the man,

Get him removed.

MURRAY.

Come, come, be clear with me;
You bid me to despatch him privily.

QUEEN.

God send me sufferance! I bid you, sir?
Nay, do not go; what matter if I did?
Nathless I never bade you; no, by God.
Be not so wroth; you are my brother born;
Why do you dwell upon me with such eyes?
For love of God you should not bear me
hard,

MURRAY

What, are you made of flesh?

QUEEN.

O, now I see.

You had rather lose your wits to do me
harm

Than keep sound wits to help me.

MURRAY.

It is right strange;

The worst man living hath some fear, some
love,

Holds somewhat dear a little for life's
sake,

Keeps fast to some compassion; you have
none;

You know of nothing that remembrance
knows

To make you tender. I must slay the
man?

Nay, I will do it.

QUEEN.

Do, if you be not mad.

I am sorry for him; and he must needs die.

I would I were assured you hate me not;

I have no heart to slay him by my will.

I pray you think not bitterly of me.

MURRAY.

Is it your pleasure such a thing were done?

QUEEN.

Yea, by God's body is it, certainly.

MURRAY.

Nay, for your love then, and for honor's
sake,

This thing must be.

QUEEN.

Yea, should I set you on?

Even for my love then, I beseech you, sir,
To seek him out, and lest he prate of me
To put your knife into him ere he come
forth:

Meseems this were not such wild work to
do.

MURRAY.

I'll have him in the prison taken off.

QUEEN.

I am bounden to you, even for my name's
sake,

When that is done.

MURRAY.

I pray you fear me not.

Farewell. I would such things were not
to do,

Or not for me; yea, not for any man.

[Exit.

QUEEN.

Alas, what honor have I to give thanks?

I would he had denied me: I had held my
peace

Thenceforth for ever; but he wrung out the
word,

Caught it before my lip, was fain of it—

It was his fault to put it in my mind,

Yea, and to feign a loathing of his fault.

Now is he about devising my love's death,
And nothing loath. Nay, since he must

needs die,

Would he were dead and come alive again

And I might keep him safe. He doth live
now

And I may do what love I will to him;

But by to-morrow he will be stark dead,

Stark slain and dead; and for no sort of
love

Will he so much as kiss me half a kiss.

Were this to do I would not do it again.

Re-enter MURRAY.

What, have you taken order? is it done?

It were impossible to do so soon.

Nay, answer me.

MURRAY.

Madam, I will not do it.

QUEEN.

How did you say? I pray, sir, speak
again:

I know not what you said.

MURRAY.

I say I will not;
I have thought thereof, and have made up
my heart
To have no part in this: look you to it.

QUEEN.

O, for God's sake! you will not have me
shamed?

MURRAY.

I will not dip my hand into your sin.

QUEEN.

It were a good deed to deliver me;
I am but woman, of one blood with you,
A feeble woman; put me not to shame;
I pray you of your pity do me right.
Yea, and no fleck of blood shall cleave to
you
For a just deed.

MURRAY.

I know not: I will none.

QUEEN.

O, you will never let him speak to them
To put me in such shame? why, I should
die
Out of pure shame and mine own burning
blood;
Yea, my face feels the shame lay hold on
it,
I am half burnt already in my thought;
Take pity of me. Think how shame slays
a man;
How shall I live then? would you have me
dead?
I pray you for our dead dear father's sake,
Let not men mock at me. Nay, if he
speak,
I shall be sung in mine own towns. Have
pity.
What, will you let men stone me in the
ways?

MURRAY.

Madam, I shall take pains the best I may
To save your honor, and what thing lieth
in me
That will I do, but no close manslayings.
I will not have God's judgment gripe my
throat
When I am dead, to hale me into hell
For a man's sake slain on this wise. Take
heed.

See you to that.

[Exit.

QUEEN.

One of you maidens there
Bid my lord hither. Now by Mary's soul,
He shall not lie and bring me into shame.
There's treason in you like a fever, hot,
My holy-natured brother, cheek and eye;
You look red through with it: sick, honor-
sick,
Specked with the blain of treason, leper-
like—
A scrupulous fair traitor with clean lips—
If one should sue to hell to do him good
He were as brotherly holpen as I am.
This man must live and say no harm of
me;
I may reprieve and cast him forth; yea,
so—
This were the best; or if he die midway—
Yea, anything, so that he die not here.

[To the MARIES within.

Fetch hither Darnley. Nay, ye gape on
me—
What, doth he sleep, or feeds, or plays at
games?
Why, I would see him; I am weary for his
sake;
Bid my lord in.—Nathless he will but
chide;
Nay, flee and laugh: what should one say
to him?
There were some word if one could hit on
it;
Some way to close with him: I wot not.—
Sir,

Enter DARNLEY.

Please it your love I have a suit to you.

DARNLEY.

What sort of suit?

QUEEN.

Nay, if you be not friends—
I have no suit towards mine enemies.

DARNLEY.

Eh, do I look now like your enemy?

QUEEN.

You have a way of peering under brow
I do not like. If you see anything
In me that irks you I will painfully
Labor to lose it; do but show me favor,
And as I am your faithful humble wife
This foolishness shall be removed in me.

DARNLEY.

Why do you laugh and mock me with stretched hands?

Faith, I see no such thing.

QUEEN.

That is well seen.

Come, I will take my heart between my lips,

Use it not hardly. Sir, my suit begins;
That you would please to make me that I am,

(In sooth I think I am) mistress and queen
Of mine own people.

DARNLEY.

Why, this is no suit;
This is a simple matter, and your own.

QUEEN.

It was, before God made you king of me.

DARNLEY.

No king, by God's grace; were I such a king

I'd sell my kingdom for six roods of rye.

QUEEN.

You are too sharp upon my words; I would
Have leave of you to free a man condemned.

DARNLEY.

What man is that, sweet?

QUEEN.

Such a mad poor man
As God desires us use not cruelly.

DARNLEY.

Is there no name a man may call him by?

QUEEN.

Nay, my fair master, what fair game is this?
Why, you do know him, it is Chastelard..

DARNLEY.

Ay, is it soothly?

QUEEN.

By my life, it is;
Sweet, as you tender me, so pardon him.

DARNLEY.

As he doth tender you, so pardon me;
For if it were the mean to save my life
He should not live a day.

QUEEN.

Nay, shall not he?

DARNLEY.

Look what an evil wit Old Fortune hath:
Why, I came here to get his time cut off.
This second fault is meat for lewd men's
mouth's;

You were best have him slain at once: 'tis
hot.

QUEEN.

Give me the warrant, and sit down, my
lord.

Why, I will sign it; what, I understand
How this must be. Should not my name
stand here?

DARNLEY.

Yea, there, and here the seal.

QUEEN.

Ay, so you say.

Shall I say too what I am thinking of? —

DARNLEY.

Do, if you will.

QUEEN.

I do not like your suit.

DARNLEY.

'Tis of no Frenchman fashion.

QUEEN.

No, God wot;
'Tis nowise great men's fashion' in French
land

To clap a headsman's taberd on their
backs.

DARNLEY.

No, madam?

QUEEN.

No; I never wist of that.
Is it a month gone I did call you lord?
I chose you by no straying stroke of sight,
But with my heart to love you heartily.
Did I wrong then? did my eye draw my
heart?

I know not; sir; it may be I did wrong:
And yet to see you I should call it right
Even yet to love you; and would choose
again,

Again to choose you.

DARNLEY.

There, I love you too;
Take that for sooth, and let me take this
hence.

QUEEN.

O, do you think I hold you off with words?
Why, take it then; there is my handwriting,
And here the hand that you shall slay him
with,

'Tis a fair hand, a maiden-colored one:
I doubt yet it has never slain a man.
You never fought yet save for game, I wis.
Nay, thank me not, but have it from my
sight;

Go and make haste for fear he be got forth;
It may be such a man is dangerous;
Who knows what friends he hath? and by
my faith

I doubt he hath seen some fighting, I do
fear

He hath fought and shed men's blood; ye
are wise men

That will not leave such dangerous things
alive;

'Twere well he died the sooner for your
sakes.

Pray you make haste; it is not fit he live.

DARNLEY.

What, will you let him die so easily?

QUEEN.

Why, God have mercy! what way should
one take

To please such people? there is some
cunning way,

Something I miss, out of my simple soul.

What, must one say "Beseech you do no
harm,"

Or, "for my love, sweet cousins, be not
hard,"

Or "let him live but till the vane
come round"—

Will such things please you? well, then,
have your way:

Sir, I desire you, kneeling down with tears,
With sighs and tears, fair sir, require of
you,

Considering of my love I bear this man,
Just for my love's sake let him not be
hanged

Before the sundown; do thus much for me,
To have a queen's prayers follow after you.

DARNLEY.

I know no need for you to gibe at me.

QUEEN.

Alack, what heart then shall I have to jest?
There is no woman jests in such a wise—

*For the shame's sake I pray you hang him
not,*

*Seeing how I love him, save indeed in silk,
Sweet twisted silk of my sad handiwork.*

Nay, and you will not do so much for me;
You vex your lip, biting the blood and all:
Were this so hard, and you compassionate?
I am in sore case then, and will weep in-
deed.

DARNLEY.

What do you mean to cast such gibes at
me?

QUEEN.

Woe's me, and will you turn my tears to
thorns?

Nay, set your eyes a little in my face;
See, do I weep? what will you make of
me?

Will you not swear I love this prisoner?
Ye are wise, and ye will have it; yet for me
I wist not of it. We are but feeble fools,
And love may catch us when we lie asleep
And yet God knows we know not this a
whit.

Come, look on me, swear you believe it not:
It may be I will take your word for that.

DARNLEY.

Do you not love him? nay, but verily?

QUEEN.

Now then, make answer to me verily,
Which of us twain is wiser? for my part
I will not swear I love not, if you will;
Ye be wise men and many men, my lords,
And ye will have me love him, ye will
swear

That I do love him; who shall say ye lie?
Look on your paper, maybe I have wept:
Doubtless I love your hanged man in my
heart.

What, is the writing smutched or gone
awry?

Or blurred—ay, surely so much—with one
tear,

One little sharp tear strayed on it by
chance?

Come, come, the man is deadly dangerous;
Let him die presently.

DARNLEY.

You do not love him;
Well, yet he need not die; it were right
hard

To hang the fool because you love him not,

QUEEN.

You have keen wits and thereto courtesy
To catch me with. No, let this man not
die;

It were no such perpetual praise to you
To be his doomsman and in doglike wise
Bite his brief life in twain.

DARNLEY.

Truly it were not.

QUEEN.

Then for your honor and my love of you
(Oh, I do love you! but you know not,
sweet,

You shall see how much), think you for
their sake

He may go free?

DARNLEY.

How freely, forth of us?

But yet he loves you, and being mad with
love

Makes matter for base mouths to chew
upon:

'Twere best he live not yet.

QUEEN.

Will you say that?

DARNLEY.

Why should he live to breed you bad re-
ports?

Let him die first.

QUEEN.

Sweet, for your sake, not so.

DARNLEY.

Fret not yourself to pity; let him die.

QUEEN.

Come, let him live a little; it shall be
A grace to us.

DARNLEY.

By God he dies at once.

QUEEN.

Now, by God's mother if I respite him,
Though you were all the race of you in one
And had more tongues than hairs to cry
on me

He should not lose a hair.

DARNLEY.

This is mere mercy—

But you thank God you love him not a
whit?

QUEEN.

It shall be what it please; and if I please
It shall be anything. Give me the warrant.

DARNLEY.

Nay, for your sake and love of you, not I,
To make it dangerous.

QUEEN.

O, God's pity, sir!

You are tender of me; will you serve me so,
Against mine own will, shew me so much
love,

Do me good service that I loath being
done,

Out of pure pity?

DARNLEY.

Nay, your word shall stand.

QUEEN.

What makes you gape so beastlike after
blood?

Were you not bred up on some hangman's
hire

And dieted with fleshmeats at his hand
And fed into a fool? Give me that paper.

DARNLEY.

Now for that word I will not.

QUEEN.

Nay, sweet love,

For your own sake be just a little wise;
Come, I beseech you.

DARNLEY.

Pluck not at my hands.

QUEEN.

No, that I will not: I am brain-broken,
mad;

Pity my madness for sweet marriage-sake
And my great love's; I love you to say this:
I would not have you cross me, out of love.
But for true love should I not chafe indeed?
And now I do not.

DARNLEY.

Yea, and late you chid,

You chafed and jested and blew soft and
hard—

No, for that "fool" you shall not fool me
so.

QUEEN.

You are no churl, sweet, will you see me
weep?

Look, I weep now; be friends with my
poor tears.

Think each of them beseeches you of love
And hath some tongue to cry on you for
love

And speak soft things; for that which
loves not you

Is none of mine, not though they grow of
grief

And grief of you; be not too hard with
them.

You would not of your own heart slay a
man;

Nay, if you will, in God's name make me
weep,

I will not hate you; but a heart, sweet lord,
Be not at heart my sweet heart's enemy.

If I had many mighty men to friend

I would not plead too lovingly with you
To have your love.

DARNLEY.

Why, yet you have my love.

QUEEN.

Alas, what shall mine enemies do to me
If I be used so hardly of my friends?

Come, sir, you hate me, yet for all your
hate

You cannot have such heart.

DARNLEY.

What sort of heart?

I have no heart to be used shamefully
If you mean that.

QUEEN.

Would God I loved you not;

You are too hard to be used lovingly.

DARNLEY.

You are moved too much for such a little
love

As you bear me.

QUEEN.

God knows you do me wrong;

God knows the heart, sweet, that I love
you with.

Hark you, fair sir, I'd have all well with
you;

Do you not fear at sick men's time of night
What end may come? are you so sure of
heart?

Is not your spirit surprisable in sleep?

Have you no evil dreams? Nay, look you,
love,

I will not be flung off your heart and
hand,

I am no snake: but tell me for your love
Have you no fancies how these things will
end

In the pit's mouth? how all life-deeds will
look

At the grave's edge that lets men into hell?
For my part, who am weak and woman-

eyed,
It turns my soul to tears; I doubt this
blood

Fallen on our faces when we twain are
dead

Will scar and burn them: yea, for heaven
is sweet,

And loves sweet deeds that smell not of
spilt blood.

Let us not kill: God that made mercy first
Pities the pitiful for their deed's sake.

DARNLEY.

Get you some painting; with a cheek like
this

You'll find no faith in listeners.

QUEEN.

How, fair lord?

DARNLEY.

I say that looking with this face of yours
None shall believe you holy; what, you
talk,

Take mercy in your mouth, eat holiness,
Put God under your tongue and feed on
heaven,

With fear and faith and—faith, I know not
what—

And look as though you stood and saw
men slain

To make you game and laughter: nay, your
eyes

Threaten as unto blood. What will you
do

To make men take your sweet word?
pitiful—

You are pitiful as he that's hired for death
And loves the slaying yet better than the
hire.

QUEEN.

You are wise that live to threat and tell me
so;

Do you love life too much?

DARNLEY.

O, now you are sweet,

Right tender now: you love not blood nor death,
You are too tender.

QUEEN.

Yea, too weak, too soft:

Sweet, do not mock me, for my love's sake; see

How soft a thing I am. Will you be hard?

The heart you have, has it no sort of fear?

DARNLEY.

Take off your hand and let me go my way
And do my deed, and when the doing is past

I will come home and teach you tender things

Out of my love till you forget my wrath.

I will be angry when I see good need,
And will grow gentle after, fear not that;
You shall get no wrong of my wrongdoing.
So I take leave.

QUEEN.

Take what you will; take all;

You have taken half my heart away with words:

Take all I have, and take no leave; I have

No leave to give: yea, shortly shall lack leave,

I think, to live; but I crave none of you;
I would have none: yet for the love I have,
If I get ever a mean to show it you,
I pray God put you some day in my hand
That you may take that too.

DARNLEY.

Well, as he please;

God keep you in such love; and so farewell.

[Exit.

QUEEN.

So fare I as your lover, but not well.—

Ah sweet, if God be ever good to me

To put you in my hand! I am come to shame;

Let me think now, and let my wits not go;
God, for dear mercy, let me not forget

Why I should be so angry; the dull blood
Beats at my face and blinds me—I am chafed to death,

And I am shamed; I shall go mad and die.

Truly I think I did kneel down, did pray,

Yea, weep (who knows?) it may be—for that.

Yea, if I wept not, this was blood brake forth

And burnt mine eyelids; I will have blood back,

And wash them cool in the hottest of his heart,

Or I will slay myself: I cannot tell:

I have given gold for brass, and lo the pay

Cleaves to my fingers: there's no way to mend

Not while life stays: would God that it were gone!

The fool will feed upon my fame and laugh;

Till one seal up his tongue and lips with blood,

He carries half my honor and good name
Between his teeth. Lord God, mine head will fail!

When have I done thus since I was alive?
And these ill times will deal but ill with me—

My old love slain, and never a new to help,

And my wits gone, and my blithe use of life,

And all the grace was with me. Love—perchance

If I save love I shall well save myself.

I could find heart to bid him take such fellows

And kill them to my hand. I was the fool

To sue to these and shame myself: God knows

I was a queen born, I will hold their heads

Here in my hands for this. Which of you waits?

Enter MARY BEATON and MARY CARMICHAEL.

No maiden of them?—what, no more than this?

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Madam, the lady Seyton is gone forth;
She is ill at heart with watching.

QUEEN.

Ay, at heart—

All girls must have such tender sides to the heart

They break for one night's watching, ache
to death:

For an hour's pity, for a half-hour's love—
Wear out before the watches, die by dawn,
And ride at noon to burial. God's my
pity!

Where's Hamilton? doth she ail too? at
heart,
I warrant her at heart.

MARY BEATON.

I know not, madam.

QUEEN.

What, sick or dead? I am well holpen of
you:

Come hither to me. What pale blood you
have—

Is it for fear you turn such cheeks to me?

Why, if I were so loving, by my hand,
I would have set my head upon the chance,
And loosed him though I died. What
will you do?

Have you no way?

MARY BEATON.

None but your mercy.

QUEEN.

Ay?

Why then the thing is piteous. Think, for
God's sake—

Is there no loving way to fetch him forth?
Nay, what a white thin-blooded thing is
love,

To help no more than this doth! Were I
in love,

I would unbar the ways to-night and then
Laugh death to death to-morrow, mock
him dead;

I think you love well with one half your
heart,

And let fear keep the other. Hark you
now,

You said there was some friend durst break
my bars—

Some Scotch name—faith, as if I wist of it!
Ye have such heavy wits to help one with—
Some man that had some mean to save him
by—

Tush, I must be at pains for you!

MARY BEATON.

Nay, madam,

It were no boot; he will not be let forth.

QUEEN.

I say, the name. O, Robert Erskine—
yea,

A fellow of some heart: what saith he?

MARY BEATON.

Madam,

The thing was sound all through, yea, all
went well,

But for all prayers that we could make to
him

He would not fly: we cannot get him forth.

QUEEN.

Great God! that men should have such
wits as this!

I have a mind to let him die for that;
And yet I wot not. Said he, he loathed
his life?

MARY BEATON.

He says your grace given would scathe
yourself,

And little grace for such a grace as that
Be with the little of his life he kept

To cast off some time more unworthily.

QUEEN.

God help me! what should wise folk do
with him?

These men be weaker-witted than mere
fools

When they fall mad once; yet by Mary's
soul

I am sorrier for him than for men right
wise.

God wot a fool that were more wise than
he

Would love me something worse than
Chastelard,

Ah, and his own soul better. Do you think
(There's no such other sort of fool alive)
That he may live?

MARY BEATON.

Yea, by God's mercy, madam,

To your great praise and honor from all
men

If you should keep him living.

QUEEN.

By God's light,

I have good will to do it. Are you sure,
If I would pack him with a pardon hence,
He would speak well of me—not hint and
halt,

Smile and look back, sigh and say love
runs out,
But times have been—with some loose
laugh cut short,
Bit off at lip—eh?

MARY BEATON.

No, by heaven he would not.

QUEEN.

You know how quickly one may be belied—
Faith, you should know it—I never thought
the worst,
One may touch love and come with clean
hands off—
But you should know it. What, he will
not fly—
Not though I wink 'myself asleep, turn
blind—
Which that I will I say not?

MARY BEATON.

Nay, not he;

We had good hope to bring him well
aboard,
Let him slip safe down by the firths to sea,
Out under Leith by night-setting, and
thence
Take ship for France and serve there out
of sight
In the new wars.

QUEEN.

Ay, in the new French wars—
You wist thereof too, madam, with good
leave—
A goodly bait to catch mine honor with
And let me wake up with my name bit
through.
I had been much bounden to you twain,
methinks,
But for my knight's sake and his love's; by
God,
He shall not die in God's despite nor mine.
Call in our chief lords; bid one see to it:
Ay, and make haste.

[*Exeunt* MARY BEATON and MARY
CARMICHAEL.

Now shall I try their teeth:
I have done with fear; now nothing but
pure love
And power and pity shall have part in me;
I will not throw them such a spirit in flesh
To make their pray on. Though he be
mad indeed,

It is the goodliest madness ever smote
Upon man's heart. A kingly night—in
faith,

Meseems my face can yet make faith in
men

And break their brains with beauty: for a
word,

An eyelid's twitch, an eye's turn, tie them
fast

And make their souls cleave to me. God
be thanked,

This air has not yet curdled all the blood
That went to make me fair. An hour
agone,

I thought I had been forgotten of men's
love

More than dead women's faces are forgot
Of after lovers. All men are not of earth.
For all the frost of fools and this cool land
There be some yet catch fever of my face
And burning for mine eyes' sake. I did
think

My time was gone when men would dance
to death

As to a music, and lie laughing down
In the grave and take their funerals for
their feasts,

To get one kiss of me. I have some
strength yet,

Though I lack power on men that lack
men's blood.

Yea, and God wot I will be merciful;
For all the foolish hardness round my heart
That tender women miss of to their praise,
They shall not say but I had grace to give
Even for love's sake. Why, let them take
their way:

What ails it them though I be soft or hard?
Soft hearts would weep and weep and let
men die

For very mercy and sweet-heartedness:

I that weep little for my pity's sake,

I have the grace to save men. Let fame
go—

I care not much what shall become of
fame,

So I save love and do mine own soul
right;

I'll have my mercy help me to revenge

On all the crew of them. How will he
look,

Having my pardon! I shall have sweet
thanks

And love of good men for my mercy's
love—

Yea, and be quit of these I hate to death,
With one good deed.

Enter the MARES.

MARY BEATON.

Madam, the lords are here.

QUEEN.

Stand you about me, I will speak to them.
I would the whole world stood up in my
face

And heard what I shall say. Bid them
come in.

*Enter MURRAY, RANDOLPH, MORTON,
LINDSAY, and o'her Lords.*

I see you, fair lords, I have a word to
you;

There is one thing I would fain under-
stand—

If I be queen or no; for by my life
Methinks I am growing unqueenly. No
man speak?

Pray you take note, sweet lord ambassador,
I am no queen: I never was born queen;
Alack that one should fool us in this
wise!

Take up my crown, sir, I will none of it
Till it hath bells on as a fool's cap hath.
Nay, who will have it! no man take it
up?

Was there none worthy to be shamed
but I?

Here are enow good faces, good to crown;
Will you be king, fair brother? or you, my
lord?

Give me a spinner's curch, a wisp of reed,
Any mean thing; but, God's love, no more
gold,

And no more shame: let boys throw dice
for it,

Or cast it to the grooms for tennis-play,
For I will none.

MURRAY.

What would your highness have?

QUEEN.

Yea, yea, I said I was no majesty;
I shall be shortly fallen out of grace.

What would I have? I would have leave
to live;

Perchance I shall not shortly: nay, for me
That have no leave to respite other lives
To keep mine own life were small praise
enow.

MURRAY.

Your majesty hath power to respite men,
As we well wot; no man saith otherwise.

QUEEN.

What, is this true? 'tis a thing wonder-
ful—

So great I cannot be well sure of it.
Strange that a queen should find such
grace as this

At such lords' hands as ye be, such great
lords:

I pray you let me get assured again,
Lest I take jest for truth and shame
myself

And make you mirth: to make your mirth
of me,

God wot it were small pains to you, my
lords,

But much less honor. I may send re-
prieve—

With your sweet leaves I may?

MURRAY.

Assuredly.

QUEEN.

Lo, now, what grace is this I have of you!
I had a will to respite Chastelard,
And would not do it for very fear of you:
Look you, I wist not ye were merciful.

MORTON.

Madam—

QUEEN.

My lord, you have a word to me?
Doth it displease you such a man should
live?

MORTON.

'Twere a mad mercy in your majesty
To lay no hand upon his second fault
And let him thrice offend you.

QUEEN.

Ay, my lord?

MORTON.

It were well done to muffle lewd men's
mouths

By casting of his head into their laps:
It were much best.

QUEEN.

Yea, truly were it so?

But if I will not, yet I will not, sir,

For all the mouths in Scotland. Now, by heaven,

As I am pleased he shall not die but live,
So shall ye be. There is no man shall die,
Except it please me; and no man shall say,
Except it please me, if I do ill or well.
Which of you now will set his will to mine?
Not you, nor you I think, nor none of you,
Nor no man living that loves living well.
Let one stand forth and smite me with his hand,

Wring my crown off and cast it underfoot,
And he shall get my respite back of me,
And no man else: he shall bid live or die.
And no man else; and he shall be my lord,
And no man else. What, will not one be king?

Will not one here lay hold upon my state?
I am queen of you for all things come and gone.

Nay, my chief lady, and no meaner one,
The chiefest of my maidens, shall bear this

And give it to my prisoner for a grace;
Who shall deny me? who shall do me wrong?

Bear greeting to the lord of Chastelard
And this withal for respite of his life,
For by my head he shall die no such way:
Nay, sweet, no words, but hence and back again.

[Exit MARY BEATON.]

Farewell, dear lords; ye have shown grace to me.

And some time I will thank you as I may;
Till when think well of me and what is done.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

CHASTELARD.

SCENE I.—*Before Holyrood. A crowd of people; among them Soldiers, Burgesses, a Preacher, &c.*

1ST CITIZEN.

They are not out yet. Have you seen the man?

What manner of man?

2ND CITIZEN.

Shall he be hanged or no?

There was a fellow hanged some three days gone

Wept the whole way: think you this man shall die

In better sort, now?

1ST CITIZEN.

Eh, these shawm-players

That walk before strange women and make songs!

How should they die well?

3RD CITIZEN.

Is it sooth men say

Our dame was wont to kiss him on the face

In lewd folk's sight?

1ST CITIZEN.

Yea, saith one, all day long

He used to sit and jangle words in rhyme
To suit with shakes of faint adulterous sound

Some French lust in men's ears; she made songs too,

Soft things to feed sin's amorous mouth upon—

Delicate sounds for dancing at in hell.

4TH CITIZEN.

Is it priest Black that he shall have by him
When they do come?

3RD CITIZEN.

Ah! by God's leave, not so;

If the knave show us his peeled onion's head

And that damned flagging jowl of his—

2ND CITIZEN.

Nay, sirs,

Take heed of words; moreover, please it you,

This man hath no pope's part in him.

3RD CITIZEN.

I say

That if priest whore's friend with the lewd thief's cheek

Show his foul blinking face to shame all ours,

It goes back fouler; well, one day hell's fire

Will burn him black indeed.

A WOMAN.

What kind of man?

'Tis yet great pity of him if he be
Goodly enow for this queen's paramour,
A French lord overseas? what doth he
here,
With Scotch folk here?

1ST CITIZEN.

Fair mistress, I think well
He doth so at times that I were fain
To do as well.

THE WOMAN.

Nay, then, he will not die

1ST CITIZEN.

Why, see you, if one eat a piece of bread
Baked as it were a certain prophet's way,
Not upon coals, now—you shall apprehend—

If defiled bread be given a man to eat,
Being thrust into his mouth, why he shall eat,

And with good hap shall eat; but if now,
say,
One steal this, bread and beastliness and all,

When scarcely for pure hunger flesh and bone

Cleave one to other—why, if he steal to eat,

Be it even the filthiest feeding—though the man

Be famine-flayed of flesh and skin, I say
He shall be hanged.

3RD CITIZEN.

Nay, stolen said you, sir?

See, God bade eat abominable bread,
And freely was it eaten—for a sign
This, for a sign—and doubtless as did God,
So may the devil; bid one eat freely and live,
Not for a sign.

2ND CITIZEN.

Will you think thus of her?

But wherefore should they get this fellow slain

If he be clear toward her?

3RD CITIZEN.

Sir, one must see

The day comes when a woman sheds her skin

As a bird moults; and she being shifted so,

The old mate of her old feather pecks at her

To get the right bird back; then she being stronger

Picks out his eyes—eh?

2ND CITIZEN.

Like enough to be;

But if it be—Is not one preaching there
With certain folk about him?

1ST CITIZEN.

Yea, the same

Who preached a month since from Ezekiel
Concerning these twain—this our queen
that is

And her that was, and is not now so much
As queen over hell's worm.

3RD CITIZEN.

Ay, said he not,

This was Aholah, the first one of these,
Called sisters only for a type—being twain,
Twain Maries, no whit Nazarene? the first

Bred out of Egypt like the water-worm
With sides in wet green places baked with slime

And festered flesh that steams against the sun;

A plague among all people, and a type
Set as a flake upon a leper's fell

1ST CITIZEN.

Yea, said he, and unto her the men went in,

The men of Pharaoh's, beautiful with red
And with red gold, fair foreign footed men,
The bountiful fair men, the courteous men,
The delicate men with delicate feet, that went

Curling their small beards Agag-fashion,
yea,

Pruning their mouths to nibble words behind

With pecking at God's skirts—small broken oaths

Fretted to shreds between most dainty lips.
And underbreath some praise of Ashtaroth
Sighed laughingly.

2ND CITIZEN.

Was he not under guard

For the good word?

1ST CITIZEN.

Yea, but now forth again—

And of the latter said he—there being two,

The first Aholah, which interpreted—

3RD CITIZEN.

But of this latter?

1ST CITIZEN.

Well, of her he said

How she made letters for Chaldean folk
And men that came forth of the wilderness
And all her sister's chosen men; yea, she
Kept not her lip from any sin of hers
But multiplied in whoredoms toward all
these

That hate God mightily; for these, he
saith,

These are the fair French people, and these
her kin

Sought out of England with her love-
letters

To bring them to her kiss of love; and
thus

With a prayer made that God would break
such love

Ended some while; then crying out for
strong wrath

Spake with a great voice after: This is
she,

Yea the lewd woman, yea the same woman
That gat bruised breasts in Egypt, when
strange men

Swart from great suns, foot-burnt with
angry soils

And strewn with sand of gaunt Chaldean
miles,

Poured all their love upon her: she shall
drink

The Lord's cup of derision that is filled
With drunkenness and sorrow, great of
sides

And deep to drink in till the dreg drips
out:

Yea, and herself with' the twain shards
thereof

Pluck off her breasts; so said he.

4TH CITIZEN.

See that stir—

Are not they come?

3RD CITIZEN.

There wants an hour of them.

Draw near and let us hearken; he will
speak

Surely some word of this.

2ND CITIZEN.

What saith he now?

THE PREACHEK.

The mercy of a harlot is a sword
And her mouth sharper than a flame of
fire.

SCENE II.—*In Prison.*

CHASTELARD.

So here my time shuts up; and the last
light

Has made the last shade in the world for
me.

The sunbeam that was narrow like a leaf
Has turned a hand, and the hand stretched
to an arm,

And the arm has reached the dust on the
floor, and made

A maze of motes with paddling fingers.
Well,

I knew not that a man so sure to die
Could care so little; a bride-night's lusti-
ness

Leaps in my veins as light fire under a
wind:

As if I felt a kindling beyond death
Of some new joys far outside of me yet;

Sweet sound, sweet smell and touch of
things far out

Sure to come soon. I wonder will death
be

Even all it seems now? or the talk of hell
And wretched changes of the worn-out
soul

Nailed to decaying flesh, shall that be
true?

Or is this like the forethought of deep
sleep

Felt by a tired man? Sleep were good
enough—

Shall sleep be all? But I shall not forget
For any sleep this love bound upon me—

For any sleep or quiet ways of death.
Ah, in my weary dusty space of sight

Her face will float with heavy scents of
hair

And fire of subtle amorous eyes, and lips
More hot than wine, full of sweet wicked
words

Babbled against mine own lips and long
hands

Spread out, and pale bright throat and
pale bright breasts,

Fit to make all men mad. I do believe
This fire shall never burn quite out to the
ash

And leave no heat and flame upon my dust

For witness where a man's heart was
burnt up.
For all Christ's work this Venus is not
quelled,
But reddens at the mouth with blood of
men,
Sucking between small teeth the sap o' the
veins,
Dabbling with death her little tender lips—
A bitter beauty, poisonous-pearled mouth.
I am not fit to live but for love's sake,
So I were best die shortly. Ah, fair love,
Fair fearful Venus made of deadly foam,
I shall escape you somehow with my
death—
Your splendid supple body and mouth on
fire
And Paphian breath that bites the lips with
heat.
I had best die.

Enter MARY BEATON.

What, is my death's time come,
And you the friend to make death kind to
me?

'Tis sweetly done; for I was sick for this.

MARY BEATON.

Nay, but see here; nay, for you shall not
die:

She has reprieved you; look, her name to
that,

A present respite; I was sure of her:

You are quite safe: here, take it in your
hands:

I am faint with the end of pain. Read
there.

CHASTELHARD.

Reprieve?

Wherefore reprieve? Who has done this
to me?

MARY BEATON.

I never feared but God would have you
live,

Or I knew well God must have punished
me;

But I feared nothing, had no sort of fear.

What makes you stare upon the seal so
hard?

Will you not read now.

CHASTELARD.

A reprieve of life—

Reprieving me from living. Nay, by God,
I count one death a bitter thing enough.

MARY BEATON.

See what she writes; your love; for love of
you;

Out of her love; a word to save your life:

But I knew this too though you love me
not:

She is your love; I knew that: yea, by
heaven.

CHASTELARD.

You knew I had to live and be reprieved:

Say I were bent to die now?

MARY BEATON.

Do not die,

For her sweet love's sake; not for pity of
me,

You would not bear with life for me one
hour;

But for hers only.

CHASTELARD.

Nay, I love you well,

I would not hurt you for more lives than
one.

But for this fair-faced paper of reprieve,
We'll have no riddling to make death shift
sides:

Look, here ends one of us. [*Tearing it.*

For her I love,

She will not anger heaven with slaying
me;

For me, I am well quit of loving her;

For you, I pray you will be comforted,

Seeing in my life no man gat good by me

And by my death no hurt is any man's.

MARY BEATON.

And I that loved you? nay, I loved you;
nay,

Why should your like be pitied when they
love?

Her hard heart is not yet so hard as yours,
Nor God's hard heart I care not if you

die.

These bitter madmen are not fit to live.

I will not have you touch me, speak to
me,

Nor take farewell of you. See you die
well,

Or death will play with shame for you, and
win,

And laugh you out of life. I am right
glad

I never am to see you any more,

For I should come to hate you easily;
I would not have you live. *[Exit.*

CHASTELARD.

She has cause enow.

I would this wretched waiting had an end,
For I wax feeblér than I was: God knows
I had a mind once to have saved this flesh
And made life one with shame. It marvels
me

This girl that loves me should desire so
much

To have me sleep with shame for bed-
fellow

A whole life's space; she would be glad to
die

To escape such life. It may be too her
love

Is but an amorous quarrel with herself,
Not love of me but her own wilful soul;
Then she will live and be more glad of
this

Than girls of their own will and their
heart's love

Before love mars them: so God go with
her!

For mine own love—I wonder will she
come

Sad at her mouth a little, with drawn
cheeks

And eyelids wrinkled up? or hot and
"quick

To lean her head on mine and leave her
lips

Deep in my neck? For surely she must
come;

And I should fare the better to be sure
What she will do. But as it please my
sweet;

For some sweet thing she must do if she
come,

Seeing how I have to die. Now three
years since

This had not seemed so good an end for
me;

But in some wise all things wear round
betimes

And wind up well. Yet doubtless she
might take

A will to come my way and hold my
hands

And kiss me some three kisses, throat,
mouth, eyes,

And say some soft three words to soften
death:

I do not see how this should break her
ease.

Nay, she will come to get her warrant
back:

By this no doubt she is sorely penitent,
Her fit of angry mercy well blown out
And her wits cool again. She must have
chafed

A great while through for anger to become
So like pure pity; they must have fretted
her

Nigh mad for anger: or it may be mistrust,
She is so false; yea, to my death I think
She will not trust me; alas the hard sweet
heart!

As if my lips could hurt her any way
But by too keenly kissing of her own.

Ah false poor sweet fair lips that keep no
faith,

They shall not catch mine false or dangerous;
They must needs kiss me one good time,
albeit

They love me not at all. Lo, here she
comes,

For the blood leaps and catches at my
face;

There go her feet and tread upon my heart;
Now shall I see what way I am to die.

Enter the QUEEN.

QUEEN.

What, is one here? Speak to me for
God's sake:

Where are you lain?

CHASTELARD.

Here, madam, at your hand.

QUEEN.

Sweet lord, what sore pain have I had for
you

And been most patient!—Nay, you are not
bound.

If you be gentle to me, take my hand.
Do you not hold me the worst heart in the
world?

Nay, you must needs; but say not yet you
do.

I am worn so weak I know not how I
live:

Reach me your hand.

CHASTELARD.

Take comfort and good heart;
All will find end; this is some grief to you,

But you shall overlive it. Come, fair love;
Be of fair cheer: I say you have done no wrong.

QUEEN.

I will not be of cheer: I have done a thing
That will turn fire and burn me. Tell me not;

If you will do me comfort, whet your sword.

But if you hate me, tell me of soft things,
For I hate these, and bitterly. Look up;
Am I not mortal to be gazed upon?

CHASTELARD.

Yea, mortal, and not hateful.

QUEEN.

O lost heart!

Give me some mean to die by.

CHASTELARD.

Sweet, enough.

You have made no fault; life is not worth a world

That you should weep to take it: would mine were,

And I might give you a world-worthier gift

Than one poor head that love has made a spoil;

Take it for jest, and weep not: let me go.

And think I died of chance or malady.

Nay, I die well; one dies not best abed.

QUEEN.

My warrant to reprieve you—that you saw?
That came between your hands?

CHASTELARD.

Yea, not long since.

It seems you have no will to let me die.

QUEEN.

Alas, you know I wrote it with my heart,
Out of pure love; and since you were in bonds

I have had such grief for love's sake and my heart's—

Yea, by my life I have—I could not choose

But give love way a little. Take my hand;

You know it would have pricked my heart's blood out

To write reprieve with.

CHASTELARD.

Sweet, your hands are kind;
Lay them about my neck, upon my face,
And tell me not of writing.

QUEEN.

Nay, by heaven,

I would have given you mine own blood to drink

If that could heal you of your soul-sickness.

Yea, they know that, they curse me for your sake,

Rail at my love—would God their heads were lopped

And we twain left together this side death!

But look you, sweet, if this my warrant hold

You are but dead and shamed; for you must die,

And they will slay you shamefully by force
Even in my sight.

CHASTELARD.

Faith, I think so they will.

QUEEN.

Nay, they would slay me too, cast stones at me,

Drag me alive—they have eaten poisonous words,

They are mad and have no shame.

CHASTELARD.

Ay, like enough.

QUEEN.

Would God my heart were greater; But God wot

I have no heart to bear with fear and die.

Yea, and I cannot help you: or I know

I should be nobler, bear a better heart:

But as this stands—I pray you for good love,

As you hold honor a costlier thing than life—

CHASTELARD

Well?

QUEEN.

Nay, I would not be denied for shame;
In brief, I pray you give me that again.

CHASTELARD.

What, my reprieve?

QUEEN.

Even so; deny me not.
 For your sake mainly: yea, by God you know
 How fain I were to die in your death's
 stead.
 For your name's sake. This were no need
 to swear,
 Lest we be mocked to death with a re-
 prievé,
 And so both die, being shamed. What,
 shall I swear?
 What, if I kiss you? must I pluck it out?
 You do not love me: no, nor honor.
 Come,
 I know you have it about you: give it
 me.

CHASTELARD.

I cannot yield you such a thing again;
 Not as I had it.

QUEEN.

A coward? what shift now?
 Do such men make such cravens?

CHASTELARD.

Chide me not:
 Pity me that I cannot help my heart.

QUEEN.

Heaven mend mine eyes that took you for
 a man!
 What, is it sewn into your flesh? take
 heed—
 Nay, but for shame—what have you done
 with it?

CHASTELARD.

Why, there it lies, torn up.

QUEEN.

God help me, sir!
 Have you done this?

CHASTELARD.

Yea, sweet, what should I do?
 Did I not know you to the bone, my sweet?
 God speed you well? you have a goodly
 lord.

QUEEN.

My love, sweet love, you are more fair than
 he,
 Yea, fairer many times: I love you much,
 Sir, know you that?

CHASTELARD.

I think I know that well.
 Sit here a little till I feel you through
 In all my breath and blood for some sweet
 while.
 O gracious body that mine arms have had,
 And hair my face has felt on it! grave
 eyes
 And low thick lids that keep since years
 ago
 In the blue sweet of each particular vein
 Some special print of me! I am right glad
 That I must never feel a bitterer thing
 Than your soft curled-up shoulder and
 amorous arms
 From this time forth; nothing can hap to
 me
 Less good than this for all my whole life
 through.
 I would not have some new pain after
 this
 Come spoil the savor. O, your round bird's
 throat,
 More soft than sleep or singing: your calm
 cheeks,
 Turned bright, turned wan with kisses hard
 and hot;
 The beautiful color of your deep curved
 hands,
 Made of a red rose that had changed to
 white;
 That mouth mine own holds the sweet-
 ness of,
 Yea, my heart holds the sweetness of it,
 whence
 My life began in me; mine that ends here
 Because you have no mercy, nay you know
 You never could have mercy. My fair
 love,
 Kiss me again, God loves you not the less:
 Why should one woman have all goodly
 things?
 You have all beauty; let mean women's
 lips
 Be pitiful and speak truth: they will not be
 Such perfect things as yours. Be not
 ashamed
 That hands not made like these that snare
 men's souls
 Should do men good, give alms, relieve
 men's pain;
 You have the better; being more fair than
 they,
 They are half foul, being rather good than
 fair,

You are quite fair: to be quite fair is best.
 Why, two nights hence I dreamed that I
 could see
 In through your bosom under the left
 flower,
 And there was a round hollow, and at
 heart
 A little red snake sitting, without spot,
 That bit—like this, and sucked up sweet—
 like this,
 And curled its lithe body right and left,
 And quivered like a woman in act to love.
 Then there was some low fluttered talk i'
 the lips,
 Faint sound of soft fierce words caressing
 them—
 Like a fair woman's when her love gets
 way.
 Ah, your old kiss—I know the ways of it:
 Let the lips cling a little. Take them off,
 And speak some word or I go mad with
 love.

QUEEN.

Will you not have my chaplain come to
 you?

CHASTELARD.

Some better thing of yours—some hand-
 kerchief,
 Some fringe of scarf to make confession
 to—
 You had some book about you that fell
 out—

QUEEN.

A little written book of Ronsard's rhymes,
 His gift, I wear in there for love of him—
 See, here between our feet.

CHASTELARD.

Ay, my old lord's—
 The sweet chief poet, my dear friend long
 since?
 Give me the book. Lo you, this verse of
 his:
*With coming lilies in late April came
 Her body, fashioned whiter for their shame,
 And roses, touched with blood since Adon
 bled,
 From her fair color filled their lips with
 red:*
 A goodly praise: I could not praise you so.
 I read that while your marriage-feast went
 on.

Leave me this book, I pray you: I would
 read
 The hymn of death here over ere I die;
 I shall know soon how much he knew of
 death
 When that was written. One thing I
 know now,
 I shall not die with half a heart at least,
 Nor shift my face, nor weep my fault
 alive,
 Nor swear if I might live and do new
 deeds
 I would do better. Let me keep the book.

QUEEN.

Yea, keep it: as would God you had kept
 your life
 Out of mine eyes and hands. I am wrung
 to the heart:
 This hour feels dry and bitter in my mouth,
 As if its sorrow were my body's food
 More than my soul's. There are bad
 thoughts in me—
 Most bitter fancies biting me like birds
 That tear each other. Suppose you need
 not die?

CHASTELARD.

You know I cannot live for two hours
 more.
 Our fate was made thus ere our days were
 made:
 Will you fight fortune for so small a grief?
 But for one thing I were full fain of death.

QUEEN.

What thing is that?

CHASTELARD.

None need to name the thing.
 Why, what can death do with me fit to
 fear?
 For if I sleep I shall not weep awake;
 Or if their saying be true of things to
 come,
 Though hell be sharp, in the worst ache
 of it
 I shall be eased so God will give me back
 Sometimes one golden gracious sight of
 you—
 The aureole woven flowerlike through
 your hair,
 And in your lips the little laugh as red
 As when it came upon a kiss and ceased,
 Touching my mouth.

QUEEN.

As I do now, this way,
 With my heart after: would I could shed
 tears,
 Tears should not fail when the heart
 shudders so.
 But your bad thought?

CHASTELARD.

Well, such a thought as this:
 It may be, long time after I am dead,
 For all you are, you may see bitter days;
 God may forget you or be wroth with you:
 Then shall you lack a little help of me,
 And I shall feel your sorrow touching you,
 A happy sorrow, though I may not touch:
 I that would fain be turned to flesh again,
 Fain get back life to give up life for
 you,
 To shed my blood for help, that long ago
 You shed and were not holpen; and your
 heart
 Will ache for help and comfort, yea, for
 love,
 And find less love than mine—for I do
 think
 You never will be loved thus in your life.

QUEEN.

It may be man will never love me more;
 For I am sure I shall not love man twice.

CHASTELARD.

I know not: men must love you in life's
 spite
 For you will always kill them; man by
 man
 Your lips will bite them dead; yea, though
 you would,
 You shall not spare one; all will die of you;
 I cannot tell what love shall do with these,
 But I for all my love shall have no might.
 To help you more, mine arms and hands
 no power
 To fasten on you more. This cleaves my
 heart,
 That they shall never touch your body
 more.
 But for your grief—you will not have to
 grieve;
 For being in such poor eyes so beautiful
 It must needs be as God is more than I
 So much more love he hath of you than
 mine;
 Yea, God shall not be bitter with my love,
 Seeing she is so sweet.

QUEEN.

Ah my sweet fool,
 Think you when God will ruin me for sin
 My face of color shall prevail so much
 With him, so soften the toothed iron's
 edge
 To save my throat a scar? nay, I am sure
 I shall die somehow sadly.

CHASTELARD.

This is pure grief;
 The shadow of your pity for my death,
 Mere foolishness of pity: all sweet moods
 Throw out such little shadows of them-
 selves,
 Leave such light fears behind. You, die
 like me?
 Stretch your throat out that I may kiss all
 round
 Where mine shall be cut through: suppose
 my mouth
 The axe-edge to bite so sweet a throat in
 twain
 With bitter iron, should not it turn soft
 As lip is soft to lip?

QUEEN.

I am quite sure
 I shall die sadly some day, Chastelard;
 I am quite certain.

CHASTELARD.

Do not think such things;
 Lest all my next world's memories of you
 be
 As heavy as this thought.

QUEEN.

I will not grieve you;
 Forgive me that my thoughts were sick
 with grief.
 What can I do to give you ease at heart?
 Shall I kiss now? I pray you have no
 fear
 But that I love you.

CHASTELARD.

Turn your face to me;
 I do not grudge your face this death of
 mine;
 It is too fair—by God, you are too fair.
 What noise is that?

QUEEN.

Can the hour be through so soon?
 I bade them give me but a little hour.

Ah! I do love you! such brief space for love!

I am yours all through, do all your will with me;

What if we lay and let them take us fast, Lips grasping lips? I dare do anything.

CHASTELARD.

Show better cheer: let no man see you mazed;

Make haste and kiss me; cover up your throat

Lest one see tumbled lace and prate of it.

Enter the Guard: MURRAY, DARNLEY, MARY HAMILTON, MARY BEATON, and others with them.

DARNLEY.

Sirs, do your charge; let him not have much time.

MARY HAMILTON.

Peace, lest you chafe the queen: look, her brows bend.

CHASTELARD.

Lords, and all you come hither for my sake,

If while my life was with me like a friend

That I must now forget the friendship of,

I have done a wrong to any man of you,

As it may be by fault of mine I have;

Of such an one I crave for courtesy

He will now cast it from his mind and heed

Like a dead thing; considering my dead fault

Worth no remembrance further than my death.

This for his gentle honor and goodwill

I do beseech him, doubting not to find

Such kindness if he be nobly made

And of his birth a courteous race of man.

You, my lord James, if you have ought toward me—

Or you, Lord Darnley—I dare fear no jot,

Whate'er this be wherein you were aggrieved,

But you will pardon all for gentleness.

DARNLEY.

For my part—yea, well, if the thing stand thus,

As you must die—one would not bear folk hard—

And if the rest shall hold it honorable, Why, I do pardon you.

MURRAY.

Sir, in all things

We find no cause to speak of you but well:

For all I see, save this your deadly fault,

I hold you for a noble perfect man.

CHASTELARD.

I thank you, fair lord, for your nobleness.

You likewise, for the courtesy you have

I give you thanks, sir; and to all these lords

That have not heart to load me at my death.

Last, I beseech of the best queen of men

And royallest fair lady in the world

To pardon me my grievous mortal sin

Done in such great offence of her: for, sirs,

If ever since I came between her eyes

She hath beheld me other than I am

Or shown her honor other than it is,

Or, save in royal faultless courtesies,

Used me with favor; if by speech or face,

By salutation or by tender eyes,

She hath made a way for my desire to live,

Given ear to me or boldness to my breath;

I pray God cast me forth before day cease

Even to the heaviest place there is in hell.

Yea, if she be not stainless toward all men,

I pray this axe that I shall die upon

May cut me off body and soul from heaven.

Now for my soul's sake I dare pray to you;

Forgive me, madam.

QUEEN.

Yea, I do, fair sir:

With all my heart in all I pardon you.

CHASTELARD.

God thank you for great mercies. Lords, set hence;

I am right loth to hold your patience here;

I must not hold much longer any man's.

Bring me my way and bid me fare well forth.

[As they pass out the QUEEN stays MARY BEATON.]

QUEEN.

Hark hither, sweet. Get back to Holy-
 rood
 And take Carmichael with you: go both
 up
 In some chief window whence the squares
 lie clear—
 Seem not to know what I shall do—mark
 that—
 And watch how things fare under. Have
 good cheer;
 You do not think now I can let him die?
 Nay, this were shameful madness if you
 did,
 And I should hate you.

MARY BEATON.

Pray you love me, madam,
 And swear you love me and will let me
 live,
 That I may die the quicker.

QUEEN.

Nay, sweet, see,
 Nay, you shall see, this must not seem de-
 vised;
 I will take any man with me, and go;
 Yea, for pure hate of them that hate him:
 yea,
 Lay hold upon the headsman and bid
 strike
 Here on my neck; if they will have him
 die,
 Why, I will die too: queens have died this
 way
 For less things than his love is. Nay, I
 know
 They want no blood; I will bring swords
 to boot
 For dear love's rescue though half earth
 were slain;
 What should men do with blood? Stand
 fast at watch:
 For I will be his ransom if I die.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE III.—*The Upper Chamber in Holy-
 rood.*

MARY BEATON *seated*: MARY CARMICHAEL
at a window.

MARY BEATON.

Do you see nothing?

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Nay, but swarms of men
 And talking women gathered in small
 space,
 Flapping their gowns and gaping with
 fools' eyes:
 And a thin ring round one that seems to
 speak,
 Holding his hands out eagerly: no more:

MARY BEATON.

Why, I hear more, I hear men shout *The
 queen.*

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Nay, no cries yet.

MARY BEATON.

Ah, they will cry out soon
 When she comes forth; they should cry out
 on her;
 I hear their crying in my heart. Nay,
 sweet,
 Do not you hate her? all men, if God
 please,
 Shall hate her one day; yea, one day no
 doubt
 I shall worse hate her.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Pray you, be at peace;
 You hurt yourself: she will be merciful;
 What, could you see a true man slain for
 you?
 I think I could not; it is not like our
 hearts
 To have such hard sides to them.

MARY BEATON.

O, not you,
 And I could nowise; there's some blood in
 her
 That does not run to mercy as ours doth:
 That fair face and the cursed heart in her
 Made keener than a knife for manslaying
 Can bear strange things.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Peace, for the people come.
 Ah—Murray, hooded over half his face
 With plucked-down hat, few folk about
 him, eyes
 Like a man angered; Darnley after him,
 Holding our Hamilton above her wrist,

His mouth put near her hair to whisper
with—
And she laughs softly, looking at his feet.

MARY BEATON.

She will not live long; God hath given her
Few days and evil, full of hate and love,
I see well now.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Hark, there's their cry *The queen!*
Fair life and long, and good days to the
queen.

Yea, but God knows. I feel such patience
here
As I were sure in a brief while to die.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

She bends and laughs a little, graciously,
And turns half, talking to I know not
whom—

A big man with great shoulders; ah, the
face,

You get his face now—wide and duskish,
yea

The youth burnt out of it. A goodly
man,

Thewed mightily and sunburnt to the
bone;

Doubtless he was away in banishment
Or kept some march far off.

MARY BEATON.

Still you see nothing?

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Yea, now they bring him forth with a
great noise,

The folk all shouting and men thrust
about

Each way from him.

MARY BEATON.

Ah, Lord God, bear with me,
Help me to bear a little with my love
For thine own love, or give me some quick
death.

Do not come down; I shall get strength
again,

Only my breath fails. Looks he sad or
blithe?

Not sad I doubt yet.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Nay, not sad a whit,
But like a man who losing gold or
lands

Should lose a heavy sorrow; his face
set,

The eyes not curious to the right or
left,

And reading in a book, his hands un-
bound.

With short fleet smiles. The whole place
catches breath,

Looking at him; she seems at point to
speak:

Now she lies back, and laughs, with her
brows drawn

And her lips drawn too. Now they read
his crime—

I see the laughter tightening her chin:

Why do you bend your body and draw
breath?

They will not slay him in her sight: I am
sure

She will not have him slain.

MARY BEATON.

Forth, and fear not:

I was just praying to myself—one word,

A prayer I have to say for her to God
If he will mind it.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Now he looks her side;

Something he says, if one could hear thus
far:

She leans out, lengthening her throat to
hear

And her eyes shining.

MARY BEATON.

Ah, I had no hope:

Yea thou God knowest that I had no
hope.

Let it end quickly.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Now his eyes are wide

And his smile great; and like another
smile

The blood fills all his face. Her check
and neck

Work fast and hard; she must have par-
doned him,

He looks so merrily. Now he comes
forth

Out of that ring of people and kneels
down;

Ah, how the helve and edge of the great
axe

Turn in the sunlight as the man shifts
hands—

It must be for a show : because she sits
And hardly moves her head this way—I
see

Her chin and lifted lips. Now she stands
up,
Puts out her hand, and they fall mutter-
ing ;
Ah !

MARY BEATON.

It is done now ?

MARY CARMICHAEL.

For God's love, stay there ;
Do not look out. Nay, he is dead by
this ;
But gather up yourself from off the floor ;
Will she die too ? I shut mine eyes and
heard—
Sweet, do not beat your face upon the
ground.
Nay, he is dead and slain.

MARY BEATON.

What, slain indeed ?

I knew he would be slain. Ay, through
the neck :
I knew one must be smitten through the
neck
To die so quick ; if one were stabbed to
the heart,
He would die slower.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Will you behold him dead ?

MARY BEATON.

Yea : must a dead man not be looked
upon
That living one was fain off ? give me
way.
Lo you, what sort of hair this fellow
had ;
The doomsman gathers it into his hand

To grasp the head by for all men to
see ;

I never did that.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

For God's love, let me go.

MARY BEATON.

I think sometimes she must have held it
so,
Holding his head back, see you, by the
hair
To kiss his face, still lying in his arms.
Ay, go and weep : it must be pitiful
If one could see it. What is this they
say ?

So perish the queen's traitors ! Yea, but
so
Perish the queen ! God, do thus much
to her
For his sake only : yea, for pity's sake
Do thus much with her.

MARY CARMICHAEL.

Prithee come in with me :

Nay, come at once.

MARY BEATON.

If I should meet with her
And spit upon her at her coming in——
But if I live then shall I see one day
When God will smite her lying harlot's
mouth—
Surely I shall. Come, I will go with
you ;
We will sit down together face to face
Now, and keep silence ; for this life is
hard,
And the end of it is quietness at last.
Come, let us go : here is no word to
say.

AN USHER.

Make way there for the lord of Bothwell ;
room—
Place for my lord of Bothwell next the
queen.

EXPLICIT.

ATALANTA IN CALYDON.

A TRAGEDY

Τοὺς ζῶντας εὖ δρᾶν. κατθανόν δι' πᾶς ἐνὶ ῥ
Γῆ καὶ σκιά· τὸ μὴδὲν εἰς οὐδὲν ῥίπτει.

EUR. FR. Mel. 20. (537.)

TO THE MEMORY

OF

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

I NOW DEDICATE, WITH EQUAL AFFECTION, REVERENCE, AND REGRET,
A POEM INSCRIBED TO HIM WHILE YET ALIVE IN WORDS WHICH
ARE NOW RETAINED BECAUSE THEY WERE LAID BEFORE HIM ;
AND TO WHICH, RATHER THAN CANCEL THEM, I HAVE
ADDED SUCH OTHERS AS WERE EVOKED BY THE
NEWS OF HIS DEATH : THAT THOUGH LOSING
THE PLEASURE I MAY NOT LOSE THE HONOR
OF INSCRIBING IN FRONT OF MY WORK
THE HIGHEST OF CONTEMPORARY
NAMES.

ὤχεο δὴ Βορέηθεν ἀπότρομος· ἀλλά σε Νύμφαι
 ἥγαγον ἀσπασίαν ἡδύπνοοι καθ' ἄλλα,
 πληροῦσαι μέλιτος θεόθεν στόμα, μή τι Ποσειδῶν
 Βλάβῃ, ἐν ὧσιν ἔχων σὴν μελίγερυν ὄπα,
 τοίος ἀοιδὸς ἔφυσ· ἡμεῖς δ' ἔτι κλαίομεν, οἷ σου
 δυνόμεθ' οἰχομένου, καὶ σε ποθοῦμεν αἰεὶ.
 εἶπε δὲ Πιερίδων τις ἀναστρεφθεῖσα πρὸς ἄλλην·
 ἦλθεν, ἰδοὺ, πάντων φίλτατος ἦλθε βροτῶν,
 στέμματα δρεψάμενος νεοθηλέα χερσὶ γεραιαῖς,
 καὶ πολὺν δάφναις ἀμφεκαλυψε κύρα
 ἡδὺ τι Σικελικαῖς ἐπὶ πηκτίσιν, ἡδὺ τι χόρδαις,
 ἄσόμενος· πολλὴν γὰρ μετέβαλλε λυραν,
 πολλάκι δ' ἐν βήσσαισι καθήμενον εὖρεν Ἀπόλλων
 ἄνθεσι δ' ἔστεψεν, τερπνὰ δ' ἔδωκε λέγειν,
 Πᾶνα τ' αἰέμνηστόν τε Πιτυν Κόρυθον τε δύσεδρον,
 ἣν τ' ἐφίλησε θεὰν θνητὸς Ἀμαδρυάδα·
 ποίτου δ' ἐν μεγάροισιν ἐκοίμισε Κυμοδάμειαν,
 τὴν τ' Ἀγαμεμνονίαν παῖδ' ἀπέδωκε πατρὶ,
 πρὸς δ' ἱερούς Δελφοὺς θεόπληκτον ἔπεμψεν Ὀρέστην
 τειρόμενον στυγεραῖς ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα θεαῖς

10

20

ὦχεο δὴ καὶ ἄνευθε φίλων καὶ ἄνευθεν αἰοιδῆς,
 δρεψόμενος μαλακῆς ἄνθεα Περσεφόνης.
 ἄχεο· κοῦκ ἔτ' ἔσει, κοῦκ αὖ ποτέ σοι παρεδοῦμαι
 ἄζόμενος, χειρῶν χερσὶ θιγῶν ὁσίαις·
 νῦν δ' αὖ μνησόμενον γλυκύπικρος ὑπήλυθεν οἰδῶς,
 οἶα τυχῶν οἴου πρὸς σέθεν οἶος ἔχω·
 οὔποτε σοῖς γέρον, ὄμμα φίλοις φίλον ὄμμασι τέρψω,
 σῆς, γέρον, ἀψάμενος, φίλτατε, δεξιτερᾶς·
 ἦ ψαφαρὰ κόνις, ἦ ψαφαρὸς βίος ἔστι· τί τουτων
 μεῖον ἐφημερίων ; οὐ κόνις ἀλλὰ βίος·
 ἀλλὰ μοι ἡδύτερός γε πέλεις πολὺ τῶν ἔτ' ἐόντων,
 ἔπλεο γάρ· σοὶ μὴν ταῦτα θανόντι φέρω,
 παῦρα μὲν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ κῆρος ἐτήτυμα· μηδ' ἀποτρεφθῆς
 πρὸς δὲ βαλὼν ἔτι νῦν ἥσυχον ὄμμα δέχου.
 οὐ γὰρ ἔχω, μέγα δὴ τι θέλων, σέθεν ἄξια δοῦναι
 θαπτομένου περ ἁπῶν· οὐ γὰρ ἔνεστιν ἔμοι·
 οὐδὲ μελικρήτου παρέχειν γάνος· εἰ γὰρ ἐνείη
 καὶ σε χεροῖν ψαύσαι καὶ σέ ποτ' αὐθις ἰδεῖν,
 δάκρυσί τε σπονδαῖ· τε κᾶρα φίλον ἀμφιπολεύειν
 ὄφθαλμούς θ' ἱερούς σους ἱερόν τε δέμας.

10

20

εἴθ' ὄφελον. μάλα γὰρ τάδ' ἂν ἀμπαύσειε μερίμνης·
 νῦν δὲ πρόσωθεν ἄνευ σήματος οἶκτον ἔγω·
 οὐδ' ἐπιτυμβίδιον θρηνῶ μέλος, ἀλλ' ἀπαμυνθείς,
 ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθεν ἔχων ἀμφιδακρυτὰ πάθη.
 ἀλλὰ σὺ χαῖρε θανών, καὶ ἔχων γέρας ἴσθι πρὸς ἀνδρῶν
 πρὸς τε θεῶν, ἐνέροις εἴ τις ἔπεστι θεός.
 χαῖρε γέρον, φίλε χαῖρε πατέρ, πολὺ φέρτατ' αἰοιδῶν
 ὧν ἴδομεν, πολὺ δὴ φέρτατ' αἰεισομένων·
 χαῖρε, καὶ ὄλβον ἔχοις, οἷόν γε θανόντες ἔχουσιν,
 ἡσυχίαν ἔχθρας καὶ φιλότητος ἄτερ. 30
 σήματος οἰχομένου σοι μνήματ' ἐς ὕστερον ἔσται,
 σοὶ τε φίλῃ μνήμῃ μνήματος οἰχομένου·
 ὃν Χάριτες κλαίουσι θεοί, κλαίει δ' Ἀφροδίτη
 καλλιχόροις Μουκῶν τερψαμένη στεφάνοις·
 οὐ γὰρ ἅπαξ ἱερούς ποτε γῆρας ἔτριψεν αἰοιδούς·
 τήνδε τὸ σὸν φαίνει μνήμα τόδ' ἀγλαίαν.
 ἦ φίλος ἦς μακάρεσσι βροτὸς σοὶ δ' εἴ τιτι Νύμφαι
 δῶρα ποθεινὰ νέμειν, ὕστατα δῶρ, ἔδοσαν.
 τὰς νῦν χάλκεος ὕπνος ἔβη καὶ ἀνήμερος αἰὼν,
 καὶ συνθαπτομένοι μοῖραν ἔχουσι μίαν. 40
 εὐδεις καὶ σὺ, καλὸν καὶ ἀγάκλυτον ἐν χθονὶ κοίλῃ
 ὕπνον ἐφικόμενος, σῆς ἀπόνοςφι πάτρας,
 τῇλε παρὰ ξανθοῦ Τυρσηνικὸν οἶδμα καθεύδεις
 νάματος, ἣ δ' ἔτι σὴ μαῖά σε γαῖα ποθεῖ,
 ἀλλ' ἀπέχεις, καὶ πρόσθε φιλόποτολις ὧν περ ἀπείπας·
 εὐδε· μάκαρ δ' ἡμῖν οὐδ' ἀμέγαρτος ἔσει.
 βαιὸς ἐπιχθονίων γε χρόνος καὶ μοῖρα κρατήσῃ,
 τοὺς δέ ποτ' εὐφροσύνη τοὺς δέ ποτ' ἄλγος ἔχει·
 πολλὰκι δ' ἡ βλάβπτει φάος ἢ σκότος ἀμφικαλύπτει
 μυρομένους, δάκνει δ' ὕπνος ἐγρηγορότας· 50
 οὐδ' ἔθ' ὅτ' ἐν τυμβοισι κῆτέδραθεν ὄμμα θανόντων
 ἢ σκότος ἢ τι φέος διήξεται ἡελίου·
 οὐδ' ὄναρ ἐννύχιον καὶ ἐνύπνιον οὐδ' ὕπαρ ἔσται
 ἢ ποτε τερπομένοισι ἢ ποτ' ὀδυρομένοισι·
 ἀλλ' ἓνα πάντες αἰεὶ θάκον συνέχουσιν καὶ ἔδραν
 ἀντὶ βροτῆς ἄβροτον, καλλιμον ἀντι κακῆς.

THE ARGUMENT.

ALTHÆA, daughter of Thestius and Eurythemis, queen of Calydon, being with child of Meleager her first-born son, dreamed that she brought forth a brand burning; and upon his birth came the three Fates and prophesied of him three things, namely these; that he should have great strength of his hands, and good fortune in this life, and that he should live no longer when the brand then in the fire were consumed: wherefore his mother plucked it forth and kept it by her. And the child being a man grown sailed with Jason after the fleece of gold, and won himself great praise of all men living; and when the tribes of the north and west made war upon Ætolia, he fought against their army and scattered it. But Artemis, having at the first stirred up these tribes to war against Æneus, king of Calydon, because he had offered sacrifice to all the gods saving her alone, but her he had forgotten to honor, was yet more wroth because of the destruction of this army, and sent upon the land of Calydon a wild boar, which slew many and wasted all their increase; but him could none slay, and many went against him and perished. Then were all the chief men of Greece gathered together, and among them Atalanta, daughter of Iasius the Arcadian, a virgin; for whose sake Artemis let slay the boar, seeing she favored the maiden greatly; and Meleager having despatched it gave the spoil thereof to Atalanta, as one beyond measure enamored of her; but the brethren of Athæa his mother, Toxeus and Plexippus, with such others as misliked that she only should bear off the praise whereas many had borne the labor, laid wait for her to take away her spoil; but Meleager fought against them and slew them: whom when Althæa their sister beheld and knew to be slain of her son, she waxed for wrath and sorrow like as one mad, and taking the brand whereby the measure of her son's life was meted to him, she cast it upon a fire; and with the wasting thereof his life likewise wasted away, that being brought back to his father's house he died in a brief space; and his mother also endured not long after for very sorrow; and this was his end, and the end of that hunting.

ἴστω δ' ὅστις οἷχ' ὑπόπερος
 φροντίσιν δαεῖς
 τὰν ἀ παιδολύμας τάλαϊνα θεστίας μήσατο
 πυρδαῇ τινα πρόνοιαν,
 καταίθουσα παιδὸς δαφονόν
 δαλὸν ἥλικ' ἐπεὶ μόλῃ
 ματρίθεν κελάδησε
 σύμμετρ' ἵν τε διαβίον
 υιορόκραντον ἐς ἄμαρ.

ÆSCH. Cho. 602-612.

THE PERSONS.

CHIEF HUNTSMAN.
 CHORUS.
 ALTHÆA.
 MELEAGER.
 ÆNEUS.
 ATALANTA.

TOXEUS.
 PLEXIPPUS.
 HERALD.
 MESSENGER.
 SECOND MESSENGER.

ATALANTA IN CALYDON.

CHIEF HUNTSMAN.

MAIDEN, and mistress of the months
 and stars
 Now folded in the flowerless fields of
 heaven,
 Goddess whom all gods love with threefold
 heart,
 Being treble in thy divided deity,
 A light for dead men and dark hours, a
 foot
 Swift on the hills as morning, and a hand
 To all things fierce and fleet that roar and
 range
 Mortal, with gentler shafts than snow or
 sleep;
 Hear now and help and lift no violent
 hand,
 But favorable and fair as thine eye's beam
 Hidden and shown in heaven; for I all
 night
 Amid the king's hounds and the hunting
 men
 Have wrought and worshipped toward
 thee: nor shall man
 See goodlier hounds or deadlier edge of
 spears;
 But for the end, that lies unreached at yet
 Between the hands and on the knees of
 gods.
 O fair-faced sun killing the stars and dews
 And dreams and desolation of the night!
 Rise up, shine, stretch thine hand out,
 with thy bow
 Touch the most dimmest height of trembling
 heaven,
 And burn and break the dark about thy
 ways,
 Shot through and through with arrows; let
 thine hair
 Lighten as flame above that flameless
 shell

Which was the moon, and thine eyes fill
 the world,
 And thy lips kindle with swift beams; let
 earth
 Laugh, and the long sea fiery from thy
 feet
 Through all the roar and ripple of stream-
 ing springs
 And foam in reddening flakes and flying
 flowers
 Shaken from hands and blown from lips of
 nymphs
 Whose hair or breast divides the wander-
 ing wave
 With salt close tresses cleaving lock to
 lock,
 All gold, or shuddering and unfurrowed
 snow;
 And all the winds about thee with their
 wings,
 And fountain-heads of all the watered
 world;
 Each horn of Achelous, and the green
 Euenus, wedded with the straitening sea.
 For in fair time thou comest; come also
 thou,
 Twin-born with him, and virgin, Artemis,
 And give our spears their spoil, the wild
 boar's hide.
 Sent in thine anger against us for sin
 done
 And bloodless alters without wine or fire.
 Him now consume thou; for thy sacrifice
 With sanguine-shining steam divides the
 dawn,
 And one, the maiden rose of all thy maids,
 Arcadian Atalanta, snowy-souled,
 Fair as the snow and footed as the wind
 From Ladon and well-wooded Mænalus
 Over the firm hills and the fleeting sea
 Hast thou drawn hither, and many an
 armed king,

Heroes, the crown of men, like gods in fight.

Moreover out of all the Ætolian land,
From the full-flowered, Lelantian pasturage
To what of fruitful field the son of Zeus
Won from the roaring river and laboring sea

When the wild god shrank in his horn and fled

And foamed and lessened through his wrathful fords,

Leaving clear lands that steamed with sudden sun,

These virgins with the lightening of the day

Bring thee fresh wreaths and their own sweeter hair,

Luxurious locks and flower-like mixed with flowers,

Clean offering, and chaste hymns; but me the time

Divides from these things; whom do thou not less

Help and give honor, and to mine hounds good speed.

And edge to spears, and luck to each man's hand.

CHORUS.

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,

The mother of months in meadow or plain

Fills the shadows and windy places

With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous

Is half assuaged for Itylus,

For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,

The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,

Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,

With a clamor 'of waters, and with might;

Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy feet;

For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,

Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,

Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?

O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,

Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!

For the stars and the winds are unto her As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;

For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,

And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;

The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;

And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover

Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
Ripe grasses trammel a travelling foot,

The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes

From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;

And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,

And the hoofed heel of a satyr crushes
The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,

Follows with dancing and fills with delight

The Mænad and the Bassarid;

And soft as lips that laugh and hide
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,

And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;

The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
Her bright breast shortening into

sighs;

The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,

But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare

The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

ALTHÆA.

What do ye singing? what is this ye sing?

CHORUS.

Flowers bring we, and pure lips that please
the gods,
And raiment meet for service; lest the day
Turn sharp with all its honey in our lips.

ALTHÆA.

Night, a black hound, follows the white
fawn day,
Swifter than dreams the white flown feet
of sleep;
Will ye pray back the night with any
prayers?
And though the spring put back a little
while
Winter, and snows that plague all men for
sin,
And the iron time of cursing, yet I know
Spring shall be ruined with the rain, and
storm
Eat up like fire the ashen autumn days.
I marvel what men do with prayers awake
Who dream and die with dreaming; any
god,
Yea the least god of all things called di-
vine,
Is more than sleep and waking; yet we
say,
Perchance by praying a man shall match
his god.
For if sleep have no mercy, and man's
dreams
Bite to the blood and burn into the bone,
What shall this man do waking? By the
gods,
He shall not pray to dream sweet things
to-night,
Having dreamt once more bitter things
than death.

CHORUS.

Queen, but what is it that hath burnt thine
heart?
For thy speech flickers like a blown-out
flame.

ALTHÆA.

Look, ye say well, and know not what ye
say;

For all my sleep is turned into a fire,
And all my dreams to stuffs that kindles it.

CHORUS.

Yet one doth well being patient of the
gods.

ALTHÆA.

Yea, lest they smite us with some four-foot
plague.

CHORUS.

But when time spreads find out some herb
for it.

ALTHÆA.

And with their healing herbs infect our
blood.

CHORUS.

What ails thee to be jealous of their ways?

ALTHÆA.

What if they give us poisonous drinks for
wine?

CHORUS.

They have their will; much talking mends
it not.

ALTHÆA.

And gall for milk, and cursing for a prayer?

CHORUS.

Have they not given life, and the end of
life?

ALTHÆA.

Lo, where they heal, they help not; thus
they do,

They mock us with a little piteousness,
And we say prayers and weep; but at the
last,
Sparing awhile, they smite and spare no
whit.

CHORUS.

Small praise man gets dispraising the high
gods;

What have they done that thou dishonorest
them?

ALTHÆA.

First Artemis for all this harried land
I praise not, and for wasting of the boar
That mars with tooth and tusk and fiery
feet

Green pasturage and the grace of standing
corn.

And meadow and marsh with springs and
unblown leaves,

Flocks and swift herds and all that bite
sweet grass,

I praise her not ; what things are these to
praise ?

CHORUS.

But when the king did sacrifice, and gave
Each god fair dues of wheat and blood and
wine,

Her not with bloodshed nor burnt-offering
Revered he, nor with salt or cloven cake ;
Wherefore being wroth she plagued the
land ; but now

Takes off from us fate and her heavy
things.

Which deed of these twain were not good
to praise ?

For a just deed looks always either way
With blameless eyes, and mercy is no
fault.

ALTHÆA.

Yea, but a curse she hath sent above all
these

To hurt us where she healed us, and hath
lit

Fire where the old fire went out, and where
the wind

Slackened, hath blown on us with deadlier
air.

CHORUS.

What storm is this that tightens all our
sail ?

ALTHÆA.

Love, a thwart sea-wind full of rain and
foam.

CHORUS.

Whence blown, and born under what
stormier star ?

ALTHÆA.

Southward across Euenus from the sea.

CHORUS.

Thy speech turns toward Arcadia like
blown wind.

ALTHÆA.

Sharp as the north sets when the snows are
out.

CHORUS.

Nay, for this maiden hath no touch of
love.

ALTHÆA.

I would she had sought in some cold gulf
of sea

Love, or in dens where strange beasts
lurk, or fire,

Or snows on the extreme hills or iron
land

Where no spring is ; I would she had
sought therein

And found, or ever love had found her
here.

CHORUS.

She is holier than all holy days or things,
The sprinkle water or fume of perfect
fire ;

Chaste, dedicated to pure prayers, and
filled

With higher thoughts than heaven ; a
maiden clean,

Pure iron, fashioned for a sword ; and
man

She loves not ; what should one such do
with love ?

ALTHÆA.

Look you, I speak not as one light of
wit,

But as a queen speaks, being heart-vexed ;
for oft

I hear my brothers wrangling in mid hall,
And am not moved ; and my son chiding
them,

And these things nowise move me, but I
know

Foolish and wise men must be to the end,
And feed myself with patience ; but this
most,

This moves me, that for wise men as for
fools

Love is one thing, an evil thing, and turns
Choice words and wisdom into fire and
air.

And in the end shall no joy come, but
grief,

Sharp words and soul's division and fresh
tears

Flower wise upon the old root of tears
brought forth,

Fruit-wise upon the old flower of tears
sprung up.

Pitiful sighs, and much regrafted pain.

These things are in my presage, and
myself

Am part of them and know not ; but in
dreams

The gods are heavy on me, and all the
fates

Shed fire across my eyelids mixed with
night,

And burn me blind, and disilluminate

My sense of seeing, and my perspicuous
soul

Darken with vision ; seeing I see not, hear

And hearing am not holpen, but mine eyes
 Stain many tender broideries in the bed
 Drawn up about my face that I may weep
 And the king wake not; and my brows and
 lips

Tremble and sob in sleeping, like swift
 flames

That tremble, or water when it sobs with
 heat

Kindled from under; and my tears fill my
 breast

And speak the fair-dyed pillows round the
 king

With barren showers and salter than the
 sea,

Such dreams divide me dreaming; for
 long since

I dreamed that out of this my womb had
 sprung

Fire and a firebrand; this was ere my son,
 Meleager, a goodly flower in fields of fight,
 Felt the light touch him coming forth, and
 wailed

Childlike; but yet he was not; and in time
 I bare him, and my heart was great; for
 yet

So royally was never strong man born,
 Nor queen so nobly bore as noble a thing
 As this my son was: such a birth God sent
 And such a grace to bear it. Then came
 in

Three weaving women, and span each a
 thread,

Saying This for strength and That for luck,
 and one

Saying Till the brand upon the hearth burn
 down,

So long shall this man see good days and
 live.

And I with gathered raiment from the bed
 Sprang, and drew forth the brand, and cast
 on it

Water, and trod the flame barefoot, and
 crushed

With naked hand spark beaten out of
 spark

And blew against and quenched it; for I
 said,

These are the most high Fates that dwell
 with us,

And we find favor a little in their sight,
 A little, and more we miss of, and much
 time

Foils us; howbeit they have pitied me, O
 son,

And thee most piteous, thee a tenderer thing
 Than any flower of fleshly seed alive.

Wherefore I kissed and hid him with my
 hands,

And covered under arms and hair, and
 wept,

And feared to touch him with my tears,
 and laughed;

So light a thing was this man, grown so
 great

Men cast their heads back, seeing against
 the sun

Blaze the armed man carven on his shield,
 and hear

The laughter of little bells along the brace
 Ring, as birds singing or flutes blown, and
 watch,

High up the cloven shadow of either plume
 Divide the bright light of the brass, and
 make

His helmet as a windy and wintering
 moon

Seen through blown cloud and plume-like
 drift, when ships

Drive, and men strive with all the sea, and
 oars

Break, and the beaks dip under, drinking
 death;

Yet was he then but a span long, and
 moaned

With inarticulate mouth inseparate words,
 And with blind lips and fingers wrung my
 breast

Hard, and thrust out with foolish hands
 and feet,

Murmuring; but those gray women with
 bound hair

Who fright the gods frightened not him; he
 laughed

Seeing them, and pushed out hands to feel
 and haul

Distaff and thread, intangible; but they
 Passed, and I hid the brand, and in my
 heart

Laughed likewise, having all my will of
 heaven.

But now I know not if to left or right
 The gods have drawn us hither; for
 again

I dreamt, and saw the black brand burst
 on fire

As a branch bursts in flower, and saw the
 flame

Fade flower-wise, and Death came and
 with dry lips

Blew the charred ash into my breast; and
Love
Trampled the ember and crushed it with
swift feet.

This I have also at heart; that not for me,
Not for me only or son of mine, O girls,
The gods have wrought life, and desire of
life,

Heart's love and heart's division; but for
all

There shines one sun and one wind blows
till night.

And when night comes the wind sinks and
the sun,

And there is no light after, and no storm,
But sleep and much forgetfulness of
things.

In such wise I gat knowledge of the gods
Years hence, and heard high sayings of one
most wise,

Eurythemis my mother, who beheld
With eyes alive and spake with lips of
these

As one on earth disflashed and disallied
From breath or blood corruptible; such
gifts

Time gave her, and an equal soul to these
And equal face to all things; thus she said.
But whatsoever intolerable or glad
The swift hours weave and unweave, I go
hence

Full of mine own soul, perfect of myself,
Toward mine and me sufficient; and what
chance

The gods cast lots for and shake out on us,
That shall we take, and that much bear
withal

And now, before these gather to the hunt,
I will go arm my son and bring him forth,
Lest love or some man's anger work him
harm.

CHORUS.

Before the beginning of years,
There came to the making of man
Time, with a gift of tears;
Grief, with a glass that ran;
Pleasure, with pain for leaven;
Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance fallen from heaven,
And madness risen from hell;
Strength without hands to smite;
Love that endures for a breath;
Night, the shadow of light,
And life, the shadow of death.

And the high gods took in hand
Fire, and the falling of tears,
And a measure of sliding sand
From under the feet of the years;
And froth and drift of the sea;
And dust of the laboring earth;
And bodies of things to be
In the houses of death and of birth;
And wrought with weeping and laughter,
And fashioned with loathing and love,
With life before and after
And death beneath and above,
For a day and a night and a morrow,
That his strength might endure for a span
With travail and heavy sorrow,
The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the south
They gathered as unto strife;
They breathed upon his mouth,
They filled his body with life;
Eyesight and speech they wrought
For the veils of the soul therein,
A time for labor and thought,
A time to serve and to sin;
They gave him light in his ways,
And love, and a space for delight,
And beauty and length of days,
And night, and sleep in the night.
His speech is a burning fire;
With his lips he travaileth;
In his heart is a blind desire,
In his eyes foreknowledge of death;
He weaves, and is clothed with derision;
Sows, and he shall not reap;
His life is a watch or a vision
Between a sleep and a sleep.

MELEAGER.

O sweet new heaven and air without a star,
Fair day, be fair and welcome, as to men
With deeds to do and praise to pluck from
thee.
Come forth a child, born with clear sound
and light,
With laughter and swift limbs and pros-
perous looks;
That this great hunt with heroes for the
hounds
May leave thee memorable and us well
sped.

ALTHÆA.

Son, first I praise thy prayer, then bid thee
speed;

But the gods hear men's hands before their lips,
And heed beyond all crying and sacrifice
Light of things done and noise of laboring men.

But thou being armed and perfect for the deed,
Abide; for like rain-flakes in a wind they grow,
The men thy fellows, and the choice of the world,
Bound to root out the tuskèd plague, and leave
Thanks and safe days and peace in Calydon.

MELEAGER.

For the whole city and all the low-lying land
Flames, and the soft air sounds with them that come;
The gods give all these fruit of all their works.

ALTHÆA.

Set thine eye thither and fix thy spirit and say
Whom there thou knowest; for sharp mixed shadow and wind
Blown up between the morning and the mist,
With steam of steeds and flash of bridle or wheel,
And fire, and parcels of the broken dawn,
And dust divided by hard light, and spears
That shine and shift as the edge of wild beasts' eyes,
Smite upon mine; so fiery their blind edge
Burns, and bright points break up and baffle day.

MELEAGER.

The first, for many I know not, being far off,
Peleus the Larissæan, couched with whom
Sleeps the white sea-bred wife and silver-shod,
Fair as fled foam, a goddess: and their son
Most swift and splendid of men's children born,
Most like a god, full of the future fame.

ALTHÆA.

Who are these shining like one sundered star?

MELEAGER.

Thy sister's sons, a double flower of men.

ALTHÆA.

O sweetest kin to me in all the world,
O twin-born blood of Leda, gracious heads
Like kindled lights in untempestuous heaven,
Fair flower-like stars on the iron foam of fight,
With what glad heart and kindliness of soul,
Even to the staining of both eyes with tears
And kindling of warm eyelids with desire,
A great way off I greet you, and rejoice
Seeing you so fair, and moulded like as gods.
Far off ye come, and least in years of these,
But lordliest, but worth love to look upon.

MELEAGER.

Even such (for sailing hither I saw far hence,
And where Eurotas hollows his moist rock
Nigh Sparta with a strenuous-hearted stream)
Even such I saw their sisters; one swan-white,
The little Helen, and less fair than she
Fair Clytæmnestra, grave as pasturing fawns
Who feed and fear some arrow; but at whiles,
As one smitten with love or wrung with joy,
She laughs and lightens with her eyes, and then
Weeps; whereat Helen, having laughed, weeps too,
And the other chides her, and she being chid speaks naught,
But cheeks and lips and eyelids kisses her,
Laughing; so fare they, as in their bloomless bud
And full of unblown life, the blood of gods.

ALTHÆA.

Sweet days befall them and good loves and lords,
And tender and temperate honors of the hearth,
Peace, and a perfect life and blameless bed.
But who shows next an eagle wrought in gold,

That flames and beats broad wings against
the sun,
And with void mouth gapes after emptier
prey?

MELEAGER.

Know by that sign the reign of Telamon
Between the fierce mouths of the encoun-
tering brine
On the strait reefs of twice-washed Salamis.

ALTHÆA.

For like one great of hand he bears himself,
Vine-chapleted, with savors of the sea,
Glittering as wine and moving as a wave.
But who girt round there roughly follows
him?

MELEAGER.

Anceus, great of hand, an iron bulk,
Two-edged for fight as the axe against his
arm,
Who drives against the surge of stormy
spears
Full-sailed; him Cepheus follows, his twin-
born,
Chief name next his of all Arcadian men.

ALTHÆA.

Praise be with men abroad; chaste lives
with us,
Home-keeping days and household rever-
ences.

MELEAGER.

Next by the left unsandalled foot know
thou
The sail and oar of this Ætolian land,
Thy brethren, Toxæus and the violent-
souled
Plexippus, over-swift with hand and tongue;
For hands are fruitful, but the ignorant
mouth
Blows and corrupts their work with barren
breath.

ALTHÆA.

Speech too bears fruit, being worthy; and
air blows down
Things poisonous, and high-seated violen-
ces,
And with charmed words and songs have
men put out
Wild evil, and the fire of tyrannies.

MELEAGER.

Yea, all things have they, save the gods
and love.

ALTHÆA.

Love thou the law and cleave to things
ordained.

MELEAGER.

Law lives upon their lips whom these
applaud.

ALTHÆA.

How sayest thou these? what god applauds
new things?

MELEAGER.

Zeus, who hath fear and custom under foot.

ALTHÆA.

But loves not laws thrown down and lives
awry.

MELEAGER.

Yet is not less himself than his own law.

ALTHÆA.

Nor shifts and shuffles old things up and
down.

MELEAGER.

But what he will remoulds and discreates.

ALTHÆA.

Much, but not this, that each thing live its
life.

MELEAGER.

Nor only live, but lighten and lift up
higher.

ALTHÆA.

Pride breaks itself, and too much gained
is gone?

MELEAGER.

Things gained are gone, but great things
done endure.

ALTHÆA.

Child, if a man serve law through all his
life

And with his whole heart worship, him all
gods

Praise ; but who loves it only with his lips,
And not in heart and deed desiring it

Hides a perverse will with obsequious
words,

Him heaven infatuates and his twin-born
fate

Tracks, and gains on him, scenting sins
far off.

And the swift hounds of violent death
devour.

Be man at one with equal-minded gods,
So shall he prosper ; not through laws torn
up,

Violated rule and a new face of things.

A woman armed makes war upon herself,
Unwomanlike, and treads down use and
wont

And the sweet common honor that she
hath,

Love, and the cry of children, and the
hand

Trothplight and mutual mouth of mar-
riages.

This doth she, being unloved ; whom if
one love,

Not fire nor iron and the wide-mouthed
wars

Are deadlier than her lips or braider hair.

For of the one comes poison, and a curse
Falls from the other and burns the lives of
men.

But thou, son, be not filled with evil
dreams,

Nor with desire of these things ; for with
time

Blind love burns out ; but if one feed it
full

Till some discoloring stain dyes all his life,
He shall keep nothing praiseworthy, nor
die

The sweet wise death of old men honor-
able,

Who have lived out all the length of all
their years

Blameless, and seen well-pleased the face
of gods,

And without shame and without fear have
wrought

Things memorable, and while their days
held out

In sight of all men and the sun's great
light

Have gat them glory and given of their
own praise

To the earth that bare them and the day
that bred,

Home friends and far-off hospitalities,
And filled with gracious and memorial
fame

Lands loved of summer or washed by
violent seas.

Towns populous and many unfooted ways,
And alien lips and native with their own.

But when white age and venerable death
Mow down the strength and life within
their limbs,

Drain out the blood and darken their clear
eyes,

Immortal honor is on them, having past
Through splendid life and death desirable

To the clear seat and remote throne of
souls,

Lands undiscoverable in the unheard-of
west,

Round which the strong stream of a sacred
sea

Rolls without wind forever, and the snow
There shows not her white wings and windy
feet,

Nor thunder nor swift rain saith anything,
Nor the sun burns, but all things rest and
thrive ;

And these, filled full of days, divine and
dead,

Sages and singers fiery from the god,
And such as loved their land and all things-
good

And, best beloved of best men, liberty,
Free lives and lips, free hands of men free-
born,

And whatsoever on earth was honorable
And whatsoever of all the ephemeral seed,

Live there a life no liker to the gods
But nearer than their life of terrene days.

Love thou such life and look for such a
death.

But from the light and fiery dreams of love
Spring heavy sorrows and a sleepless life,

Visions not dreams, whose lids no charm
shall close

Nor song assuage them walking ; and swift
death

Crushes with sterile feet the unripening
ear,

Treads out the timeless vintage ; whom do-
thou

Eschewing embrace the luck of this thy
 life,
 Not without honor; and it shall bear to
 thee
 Such fruit as men reap from spent hours
 and wear.
 Few men, but happy; of whom be thou, O
 son,
 Happiest, if thou submit thy soul to fate,
 And set thine eyes and heart on hopes
 high-born
 And divine deeds and abstinence divine.
 So shalt thou be toward all men all thy
 days
 As light and might communicable, and
 burn
 From heaven among the stars above the
 hours,
 And break not as a man breaks nor burn
 down:
 For to whom other of all heroic names
 Have the gods given his life in hand as
 thine?
 And gloriously hast thou lived, and made
 thy life
 To me that bare thee and to all men born
 Thankworthy, a praise forever; and hast
 won fame
 When wild wars broke all round thy
 father's house,
 And the mad people of windy mountain
 ways
 Laid spears against us like a sea, and all
 Ætolia thundered with Thessalian hoofs;
 Yet these, as wind baffles the foam, and
 beats
 Straight back the relaxed ripple, didst thou
 break
 And loosen all their lances, till undone
 And man from man they fell; for ye twain
 stood
 God against god, Ares and Artemis,
 And thou the mightier; wherefore she un-
 leashed
 A sharp-toothed curse thou too shalt over-
 come;
 For in the greener blossom of thy life
 Ere the full blade caught flower, and when
 time gave
 Respite, thou didst not slacken soul nor
 sleep,
 But with great hand and heart seek praise
 of men
 Out of sharp straits and many a grievous
 thing,

Seeing the strange foam of undivided seas
 On channels never sailed in, and by shores
 Where the old winds cease not blowing,
 and all the night
 Thunders, and day is no delight to men.

CHORUS.

Meleager, a noble wisdom and fair words
 The gods have given this woman; hear
 thou these.

MELEAGER.

O mother, I am not fain to strive in speech
 Nor set my mouth against thee, who art
 wise
 Even as they say and full of sacred words.
 But one thing I know surely, and cleave to
 this;
 That though I be not subtle of wit as thou
 Nor womanlike to weave sweet words, and
 melt
 Mutable minds of wise men as with fire,
 I too, doing justly and reverencing the
 gods,
 Shall not want wit to see what things be
 right.
 For whom they love and whom reject,
 being gods,
 There is no man but seeth, and in good
 time
 Submits himself, refraining all his heart.
 And I too as thou sayest have seen great
 things;
 Seen elsewhere, but chiefly when the sail
 First caught between stretched ropes the
 roaring west,
 And all our oars smote eastward, and the
 wind
 First flung round faces of seafaring men
 White splendid snow-flakes of the sunder-
 ing foam,
 And the first furrow in virginal green sea
 Followed the plunging ploughshare of
 hewn pine,
 And closed, as when deep sleep subdues
 man's breath
 Lips close and heart subsides; and closing,
 shone
 Sunlike with many a Nereid's hair, and
 moved
 Round many a trembling mouth of doubtful
 gods,
 Risen out of sunless and sonorous gulfs
 Through waning water and into shallow
 light,

That watched us; and when flying the dove
 was snared
 As with men's hands, but we shot after and
 sped
 Clear through the irremeable Symplegades;
 And chiefliest when hoar beach and herb-
 less cliff
 Stood out ahead from Colchis, and we
 heard
 Clefts hoarse with wind, and saw through
 narrowing reefs
 The lightning of the intolerable wave
 Flash, and the white wet flame of breakers
 burn
 Far under a kindling south-wind, as a
 lamp
 Burns and bends all its blowing flame one
 way;
 Wild heights untravelled of the wind, and
 vales
 Cloven seaward by their violent streams,
 and white
 With bitter flowers and bright salt scurf
 of brine;
 Heard swoop their sharp swift gales, and
 bowing birdwise
 Shriek with birds' voices, and with furious
 feet
 Tread loose the long skirts of a storm; and
 saw
 The whole white Euxine clash together
 and fall
 Full-mouthed, and thunderous from a
 thousand throats:
 Yet we drew thither and won the fleece and
 won
 Medea, deadlier than the sea; but there
 Seeing many a wonder and fearful things
 to men
 I saw not one thing like this one seen
 here,
 Most fair and fearful, feminine, a god,
 Faultless; whom I that love not, being
 unlike,
 Fear, and give honor, and choose from all
 the gods.

CENEUS.

Lady, the daughter of Thestius, and thou,
 son,
 Not ignorant of your strife nor light of
 wit,
 Scared with vain dreams and fluttering like
 spent fire,
 I come to judge between you, but a king

Full of past days and wise from years en-
 dured.
 Nor thee I praise who art fain to undo
 things done;
 Nor thee, who art swift to esteem them
 overmuch.
 For what the hours have given is given,
 and this
 Changeless; howbeit these change, and in
 good time
 Devise new things and good, not one thing
 still.
 Us have they sent now at our need for
 help
 Among men armed a woman, foreign
 born,
 Virgin, not like the natural flower of
 things
 That grows and bears and brings forth
 fruit and dies:
 Unlovable, no light for a husband's house,
 Espoused; a glory among unwedded girls,
 And chosen of gods who reverence maiden-
 hood.
 These too we honor in honoring her; but
 thou,
 Abstain thy feet from following, and thine
 eyes
 From amorous touch; nor set toward hers
 thine heart.
 Son, lest hate bear no deadlier fruit than
 love.

ALTHÆA.

O king, thou art wise, but wisdom halts;
 and just,
 But the gods love not justice more than
 fate,
 And smite the righteous and the violent
 mouth,
 And mix with insolent blood the reverent
 man's,
 And bruise the holier as the lying lips.
 Enough; for wise words fail me, and my
 heart
 Takes fire and trembles flamewise, O my
 son,
 O child, for thine head's sake; mine eyes
 wax thick,
 Turning toward thee, so goodly a weaponed
 man,
 So glorious; and for love of thine own
 eyes
 They are darkened, and tears burn them,
 fierce as fire,

And my lips pause and my soul sinks with
love.

But by thine hand, by thy sweet life and
eyes,

By thy great heart and these clasped knees,
O son,

I pray thee that thou slay me not with
thee.

For there was never a mother woman-
born

Loved her sons better; and never a queen
of men

More perfect in her heart toward whom
she loved.

For what lies light on many and they forget,
Small things and transitory as a wind o'
the sea,

I forget never; I have seen thee all thine
years

A man in arms, strong and a joy to men
Seeing thine head glitter and thine hand
burn its way

Through a heavy and iron furrow of sun-
dering spears;

But always also a flower of three suns old,
The small one thing that lying drew down
my life

To lie with thee and feed thee; a child and
weak,

Mine, a delight to no man, sweet to me.
Who then sought to thee? who gat help?
who knew

If thou wert goodly? nay, no man at all.
Or what sea saw thee, or sounded with
thine oar,

Child? or what strange land shone with
war through thee?

But fair for me thou wert, O little life,
Fruitless, the fruit of mine own flesh, and
blind,

More than much gold, ungrown, a foolish
flower.

For silver nor bright snow nor feather of
foam

Was whiter, and no gold yellower than
thine hair,

O child, my child; and now thou art
lordlier grown,

Not lovelier, nor a new thing in mine eyes,
I charge thee by thy soul and this my
breast,

Fear thou the gods and me and thine own
heart,

Lest all these turn against thee; for who
knows

What wind upon what wave of altering
time

Shall speak a storm and blow calamity?
And there is nothing stabile in the world
But the gods break it; yet not less, fair
son,

If but one thing be stronger, if one endure,
Surely the bitter and the rooted love
That burns between us, going from me to
thee,

Shall more endure than all things. What
dost thou,

Following strange loves? why wilt thou
kill mine heart?

Lo, I talk wild and windy words, and fall
From my clear wits, and seem of mine own
self

Dethroned, dispraised, disseated; and my
mind,

That was my crown, breaks, and mine
heart is gone,

And I am naked of my soul, and stand
Ashamed, as a mean woman; take thou
thought:

Live if thou wilt, and if thou wilt not,
look,

The gods have given thee life to lose or
keep,

Thou shalt not die as men die, but thine
end

Fallen upon thee shall break me unaware.

MELEAGER.

Queen, my whole heart is molten with thy
tears,

And my limbs yearn with pity of thee, and
love

Compels with grief mine eyes and laboring
breath:

For what thou art I know thee, and this
thy breast

And thy fair eyes I worship, and am bound
Toward thee in spirit and love thee in all
my soul.

For there is nothing terribler to men
Than the sweet face of mothers, and the
might.

But what shall be let be; for us the day
Once only lives a little, and is not found.

Time and the fruitful hour are more than
we,

And these lay hold upon us; but thou,
God,

Zeus, the sole steersman of the helm of
things,

Father, be swift to see us, and as thou wilt
 Help: or if adverse, as thou wilt, refrain.

CHORUS.

We have seen thee, O Love, thou art fair;
 thou art goodly, O Love;
 Thy wings make light in the air as the
 wings of a dove.
 Thy feet are as winds that divide the
 stream of the sea;
 Earth is thy covering to hide thee, the gar-
 ment of thee.
 Thou art swift and subtle and blind as a
 flame of fire;
 Before thee the laughter, behind thee the
 tears of desire;
 And twain go forth beside thee, a man with
 a maid;
 Her eyes are the eyes of a bride whom de-
 light makes afraid;
 As the breath in the buds that stir is her
 bridal breath:
 But Fate is the name of her; and his name
 is Death.

For an evil blossom was born
 Of sea-foam and the frothing of blood,
 Blood-red and bitter of fruit,
 And the seed of it laughter and
 tears.
 And the leaves of it madness and scorn;
 A bitter flower from the bud,
 Sprung of the sea without root,
 Sprung without graft from the years.

The web of the world was untorn
 That is woven of the day on the night,
 The hair of the hours was not white
 Nor the raiment of time over-worn,
 When a wonder, a world's delight,
 A perilous goddess was born;
 And the waves of the sea as she came
 Clove, and the foam at her feet,
 Fawning, rejoiced to bring forth
 A fleshly blossom, a flame
 Filling the heavens with heat
 To the cold white ends of the north.
 And in air the clamorous birds,
 And men upon earth that hear
 Sweet articulate words
 Sweetly divided apart,
 And in shallow channel and mere
 The rapid and footless herds,
 Rejoiced, being foolish of heart.

For all they said upon earth,
 She is fair, she is white like a dove,
 And the life of the world in her breath
 Breathes, and is born at her birth:
 For they knew thee for mother of love,
 And knew thee not mother of death.

What hadst thou to do being born,
 Mother, when winds were at ease,
 As a flower of the springtime of corn,
 A flower of the foam of the seas?
 For bitter thou wast from thy birth.
 Aphrodite, a mother of strife;
 For before thee some rest was on earth,
 A little respite from tears,
 A little pleasure of life;
 For life was not then as thou art,
 But as one that waxeth in years
 Sweet-spoken, a fruitful wife;
 Earth had no thorn, and desire
 No sting, neither death any dart;
 What hadst thou to do among these,
 Thou, clothed with a burning fire,
 Thou, girt with sorrow of heart,
 Thou, sprung of the seed of the seas
 As an ear from a seed of corn,
 As a brand plucked forth of a pyre,
 As a ray shed forth of the morn,
 For division of soul and disease,
 For a dart and a sting and a thorn?
 What ailed thee then to be born?
 Was there not evil enough,
 Mother, and anguish on earth
 Born with a man at his birth,
 Wastes underfoot, and above
 Storm out of heaven, and dearth
 Shaken down from the shining thereof
 Wrecks from afar overseas
 And peril of shallow and firth,
 And tears that spring and increase
 In the barren places of mirth,
 That thou, having wings as a dove,
 Being girt with desire for a girth,
 That thou must come after these.
 That thou must lay on him love?

Thou shouldst not so have been born:
 But death should have risen with thee,
 Mother, and visible fear,
 Grief, and the wringing of hands,
 And noise of many that mourn;
 The smitten bosom, the knee
 Bowed, and in each man's ear
 A cry as of perishing lands,
 A moan as of people in prison,

A tumult of infinite griefs;
 And thunder of storm on the sands,
 And wailing of wives on the shore;
 And under thee newly arisen,
 Loud shoals and shipwrecking reefs,
 Fierce air and violent light:
 Sail rent and sundering oar,
 Darkness and noises of night;
 Clashing of streams in the sea,
 Wave against wave as a sword,
 Clamor of currents, and foam;
 Rains making ruin on earth,
 Winds that wax ravenous and roam
 As wolves in a wolfish horde;
 Fruits growing faint in the tree,
 And blind things dead in their birth;
 Famine, and blighting of corn,
 When thy time was come to be born.

All these we know of ; but thee
 Who shall discern or declare ?
 In the uttermost ends of the sea
 The light of thine eyelids and hair,
 The light of thy bosom as fire
 Between the wheel of the sun
 And the flying flames of the air ?
 Wilt thou turn thee not yet nor have pity,
 But abide with despair and desire
 And the crying of armies undone,
 Lamentation of one with another,
 And breaking of city by city;
 The dividing of friend against friend,
 The severing of brother and brother;
 Wilt thou utterly bring to an end ?
 Have mercy, mother !

For against all men from of old
 Thou hast set thine hand as a curse,
 And cast out gods from their places.
 These things are spoken of thee.
 Strong kings and goodly with gold
 Thou hast found out arrows to pierce,
 And made their kingdoms and races
 As dust and surf of the sea.
 All these, overburdened with woes
 And with length of their days waxen
 weak,
 Thou slewest; and sentest moreover
 Upon Tyro an evil thing.
 Rent hair and a fetter and blows
 Making bloody the flower of the cheek,
 Though she lay by a god as a lover,
 Though fair, and the seed of a king.
 For of old, being full of thy fire,

She endured not longer to wear
 On her bosom a saffron vest,
 On her shoulder an ashwood quiver;
 Being mixed and made one through desire.
 With Enipeus and all her hair
 Made moist with his mouth, and her
 breast
 Filled full of the foam of the river.

ATALANTA.

Sun, and clear light among green hills, and
 day
 Late risen and long sought after, and you
 just gods
 Whose hands divide anguish and recom-
 pense,
 But first the sun's white sister, a maid in
 heaven,
 On earth of all maids worshipped,—hail,
 and hear,
 And witness with me if not without sign
 sent,
 Not without rule and reverence, I a maid
 Hallowed, and huntress holy as whom I
 serve,
 Here in your sight and eyeshot of these
 men
 Stand, girl as they toward hunting, and my
 shafts
 Drawn; wherefore all ye stand up on my
 side,
 If I be pure and all ye righteous gods,
 Lest one revile me, a woman, yet no wife,
 That bear a spear for spindle, and this
 bow strung
 For a web woven ; and with pure lips
 salute
 Heaven, and the face of all the gods, and
 dawn
 Filling with maiden flames and maiden
 flowers
 The starless fold o' the stars, and making
 sweet
 The warm wan heights of the air, moon-
 trodden ways
 And breathless gates and extreme hills of
 heaven.
 Whom, having offered water and bloodless
 gifts,
 Flowers, and a golden circlet of pure hair,
 Next Artemis I bid be favorable
 And make this day all golden, hers and
 ours,
 Gracious and good and white to the un-
 blamed end.

But thou, O well-beloved, of all my days
 Bid it be fruitful, and a crown for all,
 To bring forth leaves and bind round all
 my hair

With perfect chaplets woven for thine of
 thee.

For not without the word of thy chaste
 mouth,

For not without law given and clean com-
 mand,

Across the white straits of the running sea
 From Elis even to the Acheloian horn
 I with clear winds came hither and gentle
 gods,

Far off my father's house, and left un-
 cheered

Iasius, and uncheered the Arcadian hills
 And all their green-haired waters, and all
 woods

Disconsolate to hear no horn of mine
 Blown, and behold no flash of swift white
 feet.

MELEAGER.

For thy name's sake and awe toward thy
 chaste head,

O holiest Atalanta, no man dares

Praise thee, though fairer than whom all
 men praise,

And godlike for thy grace of hallowed
 hair

And holy habit of thine eyes and feet
 That make the blown foam neither swift
 nor white

Though the wind winnow and whirl it; yet
 we praise

Gods, found because of thee adorable
 And for thy sake praiseworthy from all
 men:

Thee therefore we praise also, thee as
 these,

Pure, and light lit at the hands of gods.

TOXEUS.

How long will ye whet spears with elo-
 quence,

Fight and kill beasts dry-handed with
 sweet words?

Cease, or talk still and slay thy boars at
 home.

PLEXIPPUS.

Why, if she ride among us for a man,
 Sit thou for her and spin; a man grown
 girl

Is worth a woman weaponed; sit thou
 here

MELEAGER.

Peace, and be wise; no gods love idle
 speech

PLEXIPPUS.

Nor any man a man's mouth woman-
 tongued.

MELEAGER.

For my lips bite not sharper than mine
 hands.

PLEXIPPUS.

Nay, both bite soft, but no whit softly
 mine.

MELEAGER.

Keep thine hands clean; they have time
 enough to stain.

PLEXIPPUS.

For thine shall rest and wax not red to-
 day.

MELEAGER.

Have all thy will of words; talk out thine
 heart.

ALTHÆA.

Refrain your lips, O brethren, and my
 son,

Lest words turn snakes and bite you utter-
 ing them.

TOXEUS.

Except she give her blood before the gods,
 What profit shall a maid be among men?

PLEXIPPUS.

Let her come crowned and stretch her
 throat for a knife,

Bleat out her spirit and die, and so shall
 men

Through her too prosper and through
 prosperous gods;

But nowise through her living; shall she
 live

A flower-bud of the flower bed, or sweet
 fruit

For kisses and the honey-making mouth,
 And play the shield for strong men and the
 spear?

Then shall the heifer and her mate lock
 horns,

And the bride overbear the groom, and
men
Gods; for no less division sunders these;
Since all things made are seasonable in
time,
But if one alter unseasonable are all.
But thou, O Zeus, hear me that I may
slay
This beast before thee and no man halve
with me
Nor woman, lest these mock thee, though
a god,
Who hast made men strong, and thou be-
ing wise be held
Foolish; for wise is that thing which en-
dures.

ATALANTA.

Men, and the chosen of all this people, and
thou,
King, I beseech you a little bear with
me.
For if my life be shameful that I live,
Let the gods witness and their wrath; but
these
Cast no such word against me. Thou, O
mine,
O holy, O happy goddess, i I sin
Changing the words of women and the
works
For spears and strange men's faces, hast
not thou
One shaft of all thy sudden seven that
pierced
Seven through the bosom or shining throat
or side,
All couched about one mothers' loosening
knees,
All holy born, engrafted of Tantalus?
But if toward any of you I am overbold
That take thus much upon me, let him
think
How I, for all my forest holiness,
Fame, and this armed and iron maiden-
hood,
Pay thus much also; I shall have no man's
love
Forever, and no face of children born
Or feeding lips upon me or fastening eyes
Forever, nor being dead shall kings my
sons
Mourn me and bury, and tears on daughter's
checks
Burn; but a cold and sacred life, but
strange,

But far from dances and the back-blowing
torch,
Far off from flowers or any bed of man
Shall my life be forever: me the snows
That face the first o' the morning, and cold
hills
Full of the land-wind and sea-travelling
storms
And many a wandering wing of noisy
nights
That know the thunder and hear the thick-
ening wolves—
Me the utmost pine and footless frost of
woods
That talk with many winds and gods, the
hoars
Re-risen, and white divisions of the dawn,
Springs thousand-tongued with the inter-
mitting reed
And streams that murmur of the mother
snow—
Me these allure, and know me; but no
man
Knows, and my goddess only. Lo now,
see,
If one of all you these things vex at all.
Would God that any of you had all the
praise
And I no manner of memory when I die,
So might I show before her perfect eyes
Pure, whom I follow, a maiden to my
death.
But for the rest let all have all they will;
For is it a grief to you that I have part,
Being woman merely, in your male might
and deeds
Done by main strength? yet in my body is
throned
As great a heart, and in my spirit, O
men,
I have not less of godlike. Evil it were
That one a coward should mix with you,
one hand
Fearful, one eye abase itself; and these
Well might ye hate and well revile, not
me.
For not the difference of the several flesh
Being vile or noble or beautiful or base
Makes praiseworthy, but purer spirit and
heart
Higher than these meaner mouths and
limbs, that feed,
Rise, rest, and are and are not; and for me,
What should I say? but by the gods of the
world

And this my maiden body, by all oaths
 That bind the tongue of men and the evil
 will,
 I am not mighty-minded, nor desire
 Crowns, nor the spoil of slain things nor
 the fame;
 Feed ye on these, eat and wax fat; cry
 out,
 Laugh, having eaten, and leap without a
 lyre
 Sing, mix the wind with clamor, smite and
 shake
 Sonorous timbrels and tumultuous hair,
 And fill the dance up with tempestuous
 feet,
 For I will none; but having prayed my
 prayers
 And made thank-offering for prosperities,
 I shall go hence and no man see me more.
 What thing is this for you to shout me
 down,
 What, for a man to grudge me this my
 life
 As it were envious of all yours, and I
 A thief of reputations? nay, for now,
 If there be any highest in heaven, a god
 Above all thrones and thunders of the
 gods
 Throned, and the wheel of the world roll
 under him,
 Judge he between me and all of you, and
 see
 If I transgress at all: but ye, refrain
 Transgressing hands and reinless mouths,
 and keep
 Silence, less by much foam of violent words
 And proper poison of your lips ye die.

CENEUS.

O flower of Tega, maiden, fleetest foot
 And holiest head of women, have good
 cheer
 Of thy good words: but ye, depart with
 her
 In peace and reverence, each with blame-
 less eye
 Following his fate; exalt your hands and
 hearts,
 Strike, cease not, arrow on arrow and
 wound on wound,
 And go with gods and with the gods
 return.

CHORUS.

Who hath given man speech? or who hath
 set therein

A thorn for peril and a snare for sin?
 For in the word his life is and his breath,
 And in the word his death,
 That madness and the infatuate heart may
 breed
 From the word's womb the deed
 And life bring one thing forth ere all pass
 by,
 Even one thing which is ours yet cannot
 die—
 Death. Hast thou seen him ever any-
 where,
 Time's twin-born brother, imperishable as
 he
 Is perishable and plaintive, clothed with
 care
 And mutable as sand,
 But death is strong and full of blood and
 fair
 And perdurable and like a lord of land?
 Nay, time thou seest not, death thou wilt
 not see
 Till life's right hand be loosened from
 thine hand
 And thy life-days from thee.
 For the gods very subtly fashion
 Madness with sadness upon earth:
 Not knowing in anywise compassion,
 Nor holding pity of any worth;
 And many things they have given and
 taken,
 And wrought and ruined many things;
 The firm land have they loosed and
 shaken,
 And sealed the sea with all her springs;
 They have wearied time with heavy burdens
 And vexed the lips of life with breath:
 Set men to labor and given them guerdons,
 Death and great darkness after death:
 Put moans into the bridal measure
 And on the bridal wools a stain:
 And circled pain about with pleasure,
 And girdled pleasure about with pain:
 And strewed one marriage-bed with tears
 and fire
 For extreme loathing and supreme desire.

What shall be done with all these tears of
 ours?
 Shall they make watersprings in the
 fair heaven
 To bathe the brows of morning? or like
 flowers
 Be shed and shine before the starriest
 hours,

Or made the raiment of the weeping
Seven?

Or rather, O our masters, shall they be
Food for the famine of the grievous sea,

A great well-head of lamentation
Satiating the sad gods? or fall and flow
Among the years and seasons to and fro,

And wash their feet with tribulation
And fill them full with grieving ere they
go?

Alas, our lords, and yet alas again,
Seeing all your iron heaven is gilt as gold
But all we smite thereat in vain;

Smite the gates barred with groanings
manifold,

But all the floors are paved with our
pain.

Yea, and with the weariness of lips and
eyes,

With breaking of the bosom, and with
sighs,

We labor, and are clad and fed with
grief

And filled with days we would not fain
behold

And nights we would not hear of; we wax
old,

All we wax old and wither like a leaf.

We are outcast, strayed between bright sun
and moon;

Our light and darkness are as leaves of
flowers,

Black flowers and white, that perish; and
the noon

As midnight, and the night as daylight
hours.

A little fruit a little while is ours

And the worm finds it soon.

But up in heaven the high gods one by one
Lay hands upon the draught that quick-
eneth,

Fulfilled with all tears shed and all things
done,

And stir with soft imperishable breath

The bubbling bitterness of life and
death,

And hold it to our lips and laugh; but
they

Preserve their lips from tasting night or
day,

Lest they too change and sleep, the fates
that spun,

The lips that made us and the hands that
slay;

Lest all these change, and heaven bow
down to none,

Change and be subject to the secular sway
And terrene revolution of the sun.

Therefore they thrust it from them, putting
time away.

I would the wine of time, made sharp and
sweet

With multitudinous days and nights and
tears

And many mixing savors of strange
years,

Were no more trodden of them under feet,
Cast out and spilt about their holy

places:

That life were given them as a fruit to
eat

And death to drink as water; that the
light

Might ebb, drawn backward from their
eyes, and night

Hide for one hour the imperishable
faces.

That they might rise up sad in heaven,
and know

Sorrow and sleep, one paler than young
snow,

One cold as blight of dew and ruinous
rain;

Rise up and rest and suffer a little, and
be

Awlike as all things born with us, and
we,

And grieve as men, and like slain men
be slain.

For now we know not of them; but one
saith

The gods are gracious, praising God;
and one,

When hast thou seen? or hast thou felt
his breath

Touch nor consume thy eyelids as the
sun,

Nor fill thee to the lips with fiery death?
None hath beheld him, none

Seen above other gods and shapes of
things,

Swift without feet and flying without
wings,

Intolerable, not clad with death or life,
Insatiable, not known of night or day,

The lord of love and loathing and of
strife

Who gives a star and takes a sun away;

Who shapes the soul, and makes her a barren wife

To the earthy body and grievous growth of clay ;

Who turns the large limbs to a little flame
And binds the great sea with a little sand ;

Who makes desire, and slays desire with shame ;

Who shakes the heaven as ashes in his hand ;

Who, seeing the light and shadow for the same,

Bids day waste night as fire devours a brand,

Smites without sword, and scourges without rod ;

The supreme evil, God.

Yea, with thine hate, O God, thou hast covered us,

One saith, and hidden our eyes away from sight,

And made us transitory and hazardous,
Light things and slight ;

Yet have men praised thee, saying, He hath made man thus,

And he doeth right.

Thou hast kissed us, and hath smitten ;
thou hast laid

Upon us with thy left hand life, and said,
Live: and again thou hast said, Yield up
your breath,

And with thy right hand laid upon us death.

Thou hast sent us sleep, and stricken sleep
with dreams,

Saying, Joy is not, but love of joy shall be ;

Thou hast made sweet springs for all the pleasant streams,

In the end thou hast made them bitter
with the sea.

Thou hast fed one rose with dust of many men ;

Thou hast marred one face with fire of many tears ;

Thou hast taken love, and given us sorrow again ;

With pain thou hast filled us full to the eyes and ears.

Therefore because thou art strong, our father, and we

Feeble ; and thou art against us, and thine hand

Constrains us in the shallows of the sea
And breaks us at the limits of the land ;
Because thou hast bent thy lightnings as a bow,

And loosed the hours like arrows ; and let fall

Sins and wild words and many a wingèd woe

And wars among us, and one end of all ;
Because thou hast made the thunder, and thy feet

Are as rushing water when the skies break, but thy face as an exceeding heat
And flames of fire the eyelids of thine eyes ;

Because thou art over all who are over us :
Because thy name is life and our name death ;

Because thou art cruel and men are piteous,
And our hands labor and thine hand scattereth ;

o, with hearts rent and knees made tremulous,

Lo, with ephemeral lips and casual breath,

At least we witness of thee ere we die
That these things are not otherwise, but thus ;

That each man in his heart sigheth, and saith,

That all men even as I,

All we are against thee, against thee, O God most high.

But ye, keep ye on earth

Your lips from over-speech,

Loud words and longing are so little worth ;

And the end is hard to reach.

For silence after grievous things is good,
And reverence, and the fear that makes men whole,

And shame, and righteous governance of blood,

And lordship of the soul.

But from sharp words and wits men pluck no fruit,

And gathering thorns they shake the tree at root ;

For words divide and rend ;

But silence is most noble to the end.

ALTHÆA.

I heard within the house a cry of news
And came forth eastward hither, where the dawn

Cheers first these warder gods that face the
sun

And next our eyes unrisen ; for unaware
Came clashes of swift hoofs and trampling
feet

And through the windy pillared corridor
Light sharper than the frequent flames of
day

That daily fill it from the fiery dawn ;
Gleams, and a thunder of people that cried
out,

And dust and hurrying horsemen ; lo their
chief,

That rode with Ceneus rein by rein, re-
turned.

What cheer, O herald of my lord the king ?

HERALD.

Lady, good cheer and great ; the boar is
slain.

CHORUS.

Praised be all gods that look toward
Calydon.

ALTHÆA.

Good news and brief ; but by whose hap-
pier hand ?

HERALD.

A maiden's and a prophet's and thy son's.

ALTHÆA.

Well fare the spear that severed him and
life.

HERALD.

Thine own, and not an alien, hast thou
blest.

ALTHÆA.

Twice be thou too for my sake blest and
his.

HERALD.

At the king's word I rode afoam for thine.

ALTHÆA,

Thou sayest he tarrieth till they bring the
spoil ?

HERALD.

Hard by the quarry, where they breathe,
O queen.

ALTHÆA.

Speak thou their chance ; but some bring
flowers and crown

These gods and all the lintel, and shed
wine,

Fetch sacrifice and slay ; for heaven is
good.

HERALD.

Some furlongs northward where the brakes
begin

West of that narrowing range of warrior
hills

Whose brooks have bled with battle when
thy son

Smote Acarnania, there all they made
halt,

And with keen eye took note of spear and
hound,

Royally ranked ; Laertes island-born,
The young Gerenian Nestor, Panopeus,

And Cepheus and Anceus, mightiest
thewed,

Arcadians ; next, and evil-eyed of these,
Arcadian Atalanta, with twain hounds

Lengthening the leash, and under nose and
brow

Glittering with lipless tooth and fire-swift
eye ;

But from her white-braced shoulder the
plumed shafts

Rang, and the bow shone from her side ;
next her

Meleager ; like a sun in spring that strikes
Branch into leaf and bloom into the world,

A glory among men meaner ; Iphicles,
And following him that slew the biform

bull
Pirithous, and divine Eurytion,

And, bride-bound to the gods, Æacides.
Then Telamon his brother, and Argive-

born
The seer and sayer of visions and of truth,

Amphiarus ; and a fourfold strength,
Thine, even thy mother's and thy sister's

sons.
And recent from the roar of foreign foam

Jason ; and Dryas twin-begot with war,
A blossom of bright battle, sword and

man
Shining ; and Idas, and the keenest eye

Of Lynceus, and Admetus twice-espoused,
And Hippasus and Hyleus, great in heart.

These having halted bade blow horns, and
rode

Through woods and waste lands cleft by
stormy streams,

Past yew-trees and the heavy hair of pines,

And where the dew is thickest under oaks,
 This way and that; but questing up and
 down
 They saw no trail nor scented; and one
 said,
 Plexippus, Help, or help not, Artemis,
 And we will flay thy boarskin with male
 hands;
 But saying, he ceased and said not that he
 would,
 Seeing where the green ooze of a sun-struck
 marsh
 Shook with a thousand reeds untunable,
 And in their moist and multitudinous
 flower
 Slept no soft sleep, with violent visions
 fed,
 The blind bulk of the immeasurable beast.
 And seeing, he shuddered with sharp lust
 of praise
 Through all his limbs, and launched a
 double dart,
 And missed; for much desire divided him,
 Too hot of spirit and feebler than his will,
 That his hand failed, though fervent; and
 the shaft,
 Sundering the rushes, in a tamarisk stem
 Shook, and stuck fast; then all abode save
 one,
 The Arcadian Atalanta; from her side
 Sprang her hounds, laboring at the leash,
 and slipped,
 And plashed ear-deep with plunging feet;
 but she
 Saying, Speed it as I send it for thy sake,
 Goddess, drew bow and loosed; the sudden
 string
 Rang, and sprang inward, and the waterish
 air
 Hissed, and the moist plumes of the song-
 less reeds
 Moved as a wave which the wind moves
 no more.
 But the boar heaved half out of ooze and
 slime
 His tense flank trembling round the barbéd
 wound,
 Hateful; and fiery with invasive eyes
 And bristling with intolerable hair
 Plunged, and the hounds clung, and green
 flowers and white
 Reddened and broke all round them where
 they came.
 And charging with sheer tusk he drove;
 and smote

Hyleus; and sharp death caught his sudden
 soul,
 And violent sleep shed night upon his
 eyes.
 Then Peleus, with strong strain of hand
 and heart,
 Shot; but the sidelong arrow slid, and
 slew
 His comrade born and loving country-
 man,
 Under the left arm smitten, as he no less
 Poised a like arrow; and bright blood
 break afoam,
 And falling, and weighed back by clamor-
 ous arms,
 Sharp rang the dead limbs of Eurytion.
 Then one shot happier, the Cadmean seer,
 Amphiarus; for his sacred shaft
 Pierced the red circlet of one ravening
 eye
 Beneath the brute brows of the sanguine
 boar,
 Now bloodier from one slain; but he so
 galled
 Sprang straight, and rearing cried no lesser
 cry
 Than thunder and the roar of wintering
 streams
 That mix their own foam with the yellower
 sea;
 And as a tower that falls by fire in fight
 With ruin of walls and all its archery,
 And breaks the iron flower of war be-
 neath,
 Crushing charred limbs and molten arms
 of men;
 So through crushed branches and the
 reddening brake
 Clamored and crashed the fervor of his
 feet,
 And trampled, springing sideways from
 the tusk,
 Too tardy a moving mould of heavy
 strength,
 Ancæus; and as flakes of weak-winged
 snow
 Break, all the hard thews of his heaving
 limbs
 Broke, and rent flesh fell every way, and
 blood
 Flew, and fierce fragments of no more a
 man.
 Then all the heroes drew sharp breath, and
 gazed,
 And smote not; but Meleager, but thy son,

Right in the wild way of the coming curse
Rock-rooted, fair with fierce and fastened
lips,

Clear eyes, and springing muscle and
shortening limb—

With chin aslant indrawn to a tightening
throat,

Grave, and with gathered sinews, like a
god,—

Aimed on the left side his well-handled
spear

Grasped where the ash was knottiest hewn,
and smote,

And with no missile wound, the monstrous
boar

Right in the hairiest hollow of his hide
Under the last rib, sheer through bulk and
bone.

Deep in; and deeply smitten, and to death,
The heavy horror with his hanging shafts

Leapt, and fell furiously, and from raging
lips

Foamed out the latest wrath of all his life.
And all they praised the gods with mightier
heart,

Zeus and all gods, but chieftiest Artemis,
Seeing; but Meleager bade whet knives and
flay,

Strip and stretch out the splendor of the
spoil;

And hot and horrid from the work all
these

Sat, and drew breath and drank and made
great cheer

And washed the hard sweat off their calmer
brows.

For much sweet grass grew higher than
grew the reed,

And good for slumber, and every holier
herb,

Narcissus, and the low-lying melilote,
And all of goodliest blade and bloom that
springs

Where, hid by heavier hyacinth, violet
buds

Blossom and burn; and fire of yellower
flowers

And light of crescent lilies, and such leaves
As fear the Faun's and know the Dryad's
foot;

Olive and ivy and poplar dedicate,
And many a wellspring overwatched of
these.

There now they rest; but me the king bade
bear

Good tidings to rejoice this town and thee.
Wherefore be glad, and all ye give much
thanks

For fallen is all the trouble of Calydon.

ALTHÆA.

Laud ye the gods; for this they have given
is good

And what shall be they hide until their
time.

Much good and somewhat grievous hast
thou said,

And either well; but let all sad things be,
Till all have made before the prosperous
gods

Burnt-offering, and poured out the floral
wine.

Look fair, O gods, and favorable; for we
Praise you with no false heart or flattering
mouth

Being merciful, but with pure souls and
prayer.

HERALD.

Thou hast prayed well; for whoso fears
not these,

But once being prosperous waxes huge of
heart,

Him shall some new thing unaware de-
stroy.

CHORUS.

O that I now, I too were
By deep wells and water-floods,

Streams of ancient hills, and where
All the wan green places bear

Blossoms cleaving to the sod,
Fruitless fruit, and grasses fair

Or such darkest ivy-buds
As divide thy yellow hair,

Bacchus, and their leaves that nod
Round thy fawnskin brush the bare

Snow-soft shoulders of a god;
There the year is sweet, and there

Earth is full of secret springs,
And the fervent rose-cheeked hours,

Those that marry dawn and noon,
There are sunless, there look pale

In dim leaves and hidden air,
Pale as grass or latter flowers

Or the wild vine's wan wet rings
Full of dew beneath the moon,

And all day the nightingale
Sleeps, and all night sings;

There in cold remote recesses

That nor alien eye assail,
 Feet, nor imminence of wings.
 Nor a wind nor any tune,
 Thou, O queen and holiest,
 Flower the whitest of all things,
 With reluctant lengthening tresses
 And with sudden splendid breast
 Save of maidens unbeholden,
 There are wont to enter, there
 Thy divine sweet limbs and golden
 Maiden growth of unbound hair,
 Bathed in waters white,
 Shine, and many a maid's by thee
 In moist woodland or the hilly
 Flowerless brakes where wells abound
 Out of all men's sight;
 Or in lower pools that see
 All their marges clothed all roun
 With the innumerable lily,
 Whence the golden-girdled bee
 Flits through flowering rush to fret
 White or duskier violet,
 Fair as those that in far years
 With their buds left luminous
 And their little leaves made wet
 From the warmer dew of tears,
 Mother's tears in extreme need,
 Hid the limbs of Iamus,
 Of thy brother's seed;
 For his heart was piteous
 Toward him, even as thine heart now
 Pitiful toward us;
 Thine, O goddess, turning hither
 A benignant blameless brow;
 Seeing enough of evil done
 And lives withered as leaves wither
 In the blasting of the sun;
 Seeing enough of hunters dead,
 Ruin enough of all our year,
 Herds and harvests slain and shed
 Herdsmen stricken many an one,
 Fruits and flocks consumed together,
 And great length of deadly days.
 Yet with reverent lips and fear
 Turn we toward thee, turn and praise
 For this lightening of clear weather
 And prosperities begun.
 For not seldom, when all air
 As bright water without breath
 Shines, and when men fear not, fate
 Without thunder unaware
 Breaks, and brings down death.
 Joy with grief ye great gods give,
 Good with bad, and overbear
 All the pride of us that live,

All the high estate,
 As ye long since overbore,
 As in old time long before,
 Many a strong man and a great,
 All that were.
 But do thou, sweet, otherwise,
 Having heed of all our prayer,
 Taking note of all our sighs;
 We beseech thee by thy light,
 By thy bow, and thy sweet eyes,
 And the kingdom of the night,
 Be thou favorable and fair;
 By thine arrows and thy might
 And Orion overthrown;
 By the maiden thy delight,
 By the indissoluble zone
 And the sacred hair.

MESSANGER.

Maidens, if ye will sing now, shift your
 song,
 Bow down, cry, wail for pity; is this a
 time
 For singing? nay, for strewing of dust and
 ash,
 Rent raiment, and for bruising of the
 breast.

CHORUS.

What new thing wolf-like lurks behind thy
 words?
 What snake's tongue in thy lips? what fire
 in the eyes?

MESSANGER.

Bring me before the queen and I will
 speak.

CHORUS.

Lo, she comes forth as from thank-offering
 made.

MESSANGER.

A barren offering for a bitter gift

ALTHÆA.

What are these borne on branches, and the
 face
 Covered? no mean men living, but now
 slain
 Such honor have they, if any dwell with
 death.

MESSANGER.

Queen, thy twain brethren and thy mother's
 sons.

ALTHÆA.

Lay down your dead till I behold their
blood
If it be mine indeed, and I will weep.

MESSENGER.

Weep if thou wilt, for these men shall no
more.

ALTHÆA.

O brethren, O my father's sons, of me
Well loved and well reputed, I should
weep
Tears dearer than the dear blood drawn
from you
But that I know you not uncomforted,
Sleeping no shameful sleep, however slain,
For my son surely hath avenged you dead.

MESSENGER.

Nay, should thine own seed slay himself,
O queen?

ALTHÆA.

Thy double word brings forth a double
death.

MESSENGER.

Know this then singly, by one hand they
fell.

ALTHÆA.

What mutterest thou with thine ambiguous
mouth?

MESSENGER.

Slain by thy son's hand; is that saying so
hard?

ALTHÆA.

Our time is come upon us: it is here.

CHORUS.

O miserable, and spoiled at thine own
hand.

ALTHÆA.

Wert thou not called Meleager from this
womb?

CHORUS.

A grievous huntsman hath it bred to thee.

ALTHÆA.

Wert thou born fire, and shalt thou not
devour?

CHORUS.

The fire thou madest, will it consume even
thee?

ALTHÆA.

My dreams are fallen upon me; burn thou
too.

CHORUS.

Not without God are visions born and die.

ALTHÆA.

The gods are many about me; I am one.

CHORUS.

She groans as men wrestling with heavier
gods.

ALTHÆA.

They rend me, they divide me, they de-
stroy.

CHORUS.

Or one laboring in travail of strange births.

ALTHÆA.

They are strong, they are strong; I am
broken, and these prevail.

CHORUS.

The god is great against her; she will die.

ALTHÆA.

Yea, but not now; for my heart too is
great.

I would I were not here in sight of the sun.
But thou, speak all thou sawest, and I will
die.

MESSENGER.

O queen, for queenlike hast thou borne
thyself,

A little word may hold so great mischance.

For in division of the sanguine spoil

These men thy brethren wrangling bade
yield up

The boar's head and the horror of the hide,
That this might stand a wonder in Caly-
don,

Hallowed; and some drew toward them;
but thy son,

With great hands grasping all that weight
of hair,

Cast down the dead heap clanging and
collapsed

At female feet, saying, This thy spoil, not
mine,

Maiden, thine own hand for thyself hath
reaped,

And all this praise God gives thee: she
 thereat
 Laughed, as when dawn touches the sacred
 night
 The sky sees laugh and redden and divide
 Dim lips and eyelids virgin of the sun,
 Hers, and the warm slow breasts of morn-
 ing heave,
 Fruitful, and flushed with flame from lamp-
 lit hours,
 And maiden undulation of clear hair
 Color the clouds; so laughed she from pure
 heart
 Lit with a low blush to the braided hair,
 And rose-colored and cold like very dawn,
 Golden and godlike, chastely with chaste
 lips
 A faint, grave laugh; and all they held
 their peace,
 And she passed by them. Then one cried,
 Lo now,
 Shall not the Arcadian shoot out lips
 at us,
 Saying all we were despoiled by this one
 girl?
 And all they rode against her violently
 And cast the fresh crown from her hair,
 and now
 They had rent her spoil away, dishonoring
 her,
 Save that Meleager, as a tame lion chafed,
 Bore on them, broke them, as fire cleaves
 wood
 So clove and drove them, smitten in twain;
 but she
 Smote not nor heaved up hand; and this
 man first,
 Plexippus, crying out, this for Love's sake,
 sweet,
 Drove at Meleager, who with spear
 straightening
 Pierced his cheek through; then Toxeus
 made for him,
 Dumb, but his spear spake; vain and vio-
 lent words,
 Fruitless; for him too, stricken through
 both sides,
 The earth felt falling, and his horse's
 foam
 Blanched thy son's face, his slayer; and
 these being slain,
 None moved nor spake; but Ceneus bade
 bear hence
 These made of heaven infatuate in their
 deaths,

Foolish; for these would baffle fate, and
 fell,
 And they passed on, and all men honored
 her,
 Being honorable, as one revered of heaven.

ALTHÆA.

What say ye, Women? is all this not well
 done?

CHORUS.

No man doth well but God hath part in
 him.

ALTHÆA.

But no part here; for these my brethren
 born

Ye have no part in, these ye know not of
 As I that was their sister, a sacrifice
 Slain in their slaying. I would I had died
 for these;

For this man dead walked with me, child
 by child,

And made a weak staff for my feeble feet
 With his own tender wrist and hand, and
 held

And led me softly, and showed me gold
 and steel

And shining shapes of mirror and bright
 crown

And all things fair; and threw light spears,
 and brought

Young hounds to huddle at my feet and
 thrust

Tame heads against my little maiden
 breasts,

And please me with great eyes; and those
 days went,

And these are bitter, and I a barren
 queen

And sister miserable, a grievous thing
 And mother of many curses; and she
 too,

My sister Leda, sitting overseas
 With fair fruits round her, and her faultless
 lord,

Shall curse me, saying, A sorrow and not
 a son,

Sister, thou barest, even a burning fire
 A brand consuming thine own soul and
 me.

But ye now, sons of Thestius, make good
 cheer,

For ye shall have such wood to funeral
 fire

As no king hath; and flame that once burnt
down
Oil shall not quicken or breath relume or
wine
Refresh again; much costlier than fine
gold,
And more than many lives of wandering
men.

CHORUS.

O queen, thou hast yet with thee love-
worthy things,
Thine husband, and the great strength of
thy son.

ALTILÆA.

Who shall get brothers for me while I
live?
Who bear them? who bring forth in lieu
of these?
Are not our fathers and our brethren one,
And no man like them? are not mine here
slain?
Have we not hung together, he and I,
Flowerwise feeding as the feeding bees,
With mother-milk for honey? and this
man too,
Dead, with my son's spear thrust between
his sides,
Hath he not seen us, later born than he,
Laugh with lips filled, and laughed again
for love?
There were no sons then in the world, nor
spears,
Nor deadly births of women; but the
gods
Allowed us, and our days were clear of
these.
I would I had died unwedded, and brought
forth
No spouts to vex the world; for these that
spake
Sweet words long since and loved me will
not speak
Nor love nor look upon men; and all my
life
I shall not hear nor see them living men.
But I too living, how shall I now live?
What life shall this be with my son, to
know
What hath been and desire what will not
be,
Look for dead eyes and listen for dead
lips,
And kill mine own heart with remembering
them,

And with those eyes that see the slayer
alive
Weep, and wring hands that clasp him by
the hand?
How shall I bear my dreams of them, to
hear
False voices, feel the kisses of false
mouths
And footless sound of perished feet, and
then
Wake and hear only it may be their own
hounds
Whine masterless in miserable sleep,
And see their boar spears and their beds
and seats
And all the gear and housings of their
lives
And not the men? shall hounds and horses
mourn,
Pine with strange eyes, and prick up hun-
gry ears,
Famish and fail at heart for their dear
lords,
And I not heed at all? and those blind
things
Fall off from life for love's sake, and I
live?
Surely some death is better than some
life,
Better one death for him and these and
me.
For if the gods had slain them it may be
I had endured it; if they had fallen by
war
Or by the nets and knives of privy death
And by hired hands while sleeping, this
thing too
I had set my soul to suffer; or this hunt,
Had this despatched them, under tusk or
tooth,
Torn, sanguine, trodden, broken; for all
deaths
Or honorable or with facile feet avenged
And hands of swift gods following, all save
this,
Are bearable; but not for their sweet land
Fighting, but not a sacrifice, lo these
Dead; for I had not then shed all mine
heart
Out at mine eyes: then either with good
speed,
Being just, I had slain their slayer aton-
ingly,
Or strewn with flowers their fire and on
their tombs

Hung crowns, and over them a song, and
seen

Their praise outflame their ashes ; for all
men,

All maidens, had come thither, and from
pure lips

Shed songs upon them, from heroic eyes
Tears; and their death had been a death-
less life;

But now, by no man hired nor alien
sword,

By their own kindred are they fallen, in
peace,

After much peril, friendless among friends,
By hateful hands they loved; and how shall
mine

Touch these returning red and not from
war,

These fatal from the vintage of men's
veins,

Dead men my brethren ? how shall these
wash off

No festal stains of undelightful wine

How mix the blood, my blood on them,
with me,

Holding mine hand ? or how shall I say,
son,

That am no sister ? but by night and day
Shall we not sit and hate each other, and
think

Things hate-worthy ? not live with shame-
fast eyes,

Brow-beaten, treading soft with fearful
feet,

Each unupbraided, each without rebuke

Convicted, and without a word reviled

Each of another ? and I shall let thee live
And see thee strong and hear men for thy
sake

Praise me, but these thou wouldest not let
live

No man shall praise for ever ? these shall lie
Dead, unbeloved, unholpen, all through
thee ?

Sweet were they toward me living, and
mine heart

Desired them, but was then well satisfied,
That now is as men hungered ; and these
dead

I shall want always to the day I die
For all things else and all men may re-
new ;

Yea, son for son the gods may give and
take,

But never a brother or sister any more.

CHORUS.

Nay, for the son lies close about thine
heart,

Full of thy milk, warm from thy womb,
and drains

Life and blood of life and all thy fruit,
Eats thee and drinks thee as who breaks
bread and eats,

Treads wine and drinks, thyself a sect of
thee;

And if he feed not, shall not thy flesh
faint ?

Or drink not, are not thy lips dead for
thirst ?

This thing moves more than all things,
even thy son,

That thou cleave to him; and he shall
honor thee,

Thy womb that bare him and the breasts
he knew,

Reverencing most for thy sake all his gods.

ALTHÆA.

But these the gods too gave me, and these
my son,

Not reverencing his gods nor mine own
heart

Nor the old sweet years nor all venerable
things,

But cruel, and in his ravin like a beast,
Hath taken away to slay them : yea, and
she,

She the strange woman, she the flower,
the sword,

Red from spilt blood, a mortal flower to
men,

Adorable, detestable—even she
Saw with strange eyes and with strange
lips rejoiced,

Seeing these mine own slain of mine own,
and me

Made miserable above all miseries made,
A grief among all women in the world,

A name to be washed out with all men's
tears.

CHORUS.

Strengthen thy spirit; is this not also a
god,

Chance, and the wheel of all necessities ?
Hard things have fallen upon us from harsh
gods,

Whom lest worse hap rebuke we not for
these.

ALTHÆA.

My spirit is strong against itself, and I
 For these things sake cry out on mine own
 soul
 That it endures outrage, and dolorous
 days,
 And life, and this inexpiable impotence.
 Weak am I, weak and shameful; my breath
 drawn
 Shames me, and monstrous things and
 violent gods.
 What shall atone? what heal me? what
 bring back
 Strength to the foot, light to the face?
 what herb
 Assuage me? what restore me? what re-
 lease?
 What strange things eaten or drunken, O
 great gods,
 Make me as you or as the beasts that feed,
 Slay and divide and cherish their own
 hearts?
 For these ye show us; and we less than
 these
 Have not wherewith to live as all these
 things
 Which all their lives fare after their own
 kind
 As who doth well rejoicing; but we ill,
 Weeping or laughing, we whom eyesight
 fails,
 Knowledge and light of face and perfect
 heart,
 And hands we lack, and wit; and all our
 days
 Sin, and have hunger, and die infatuated.
 For madness have ye given us and not
 health,
 And sins whereof we know not; and for
 these
 Death, and sudden destruction unaware.
 What shall we say now: what thing comes
 of us?

CHORUS.

Alas, for all this all men undergo.

ALTHÆA.

Wherefore I will not that these twain, O
 gods,
 Die as a dog dies, eaten of creeping things,
 Abominable, a loathing; but though dead
 Shall they have honor and such funereal
 flame
 As strews men's ashes in their enemies'
 face

And blinds their eyes who hate them: lest
 men say,
 "Lo how they lie, and living had great
 kin,
 And none of these hath pity of them, and
 and none
 Regards them lying, and none is wrung at
 heart,
 None moved in spirit for them, naked and
 slain,
 Abhorred, abased, and no tears comfort
 them";
 And in the dark this grieve Eurythemis,
 Hearing how these her sons come down to
 her
 Unburied, unavenged, as kinless men,
 And had a queen their sister. That were
 shame
 Worse than this grief. Yet how to atone
 at all
 I know not; seeing the love of my born
 son,
 A new-made mother's new born-love, that
 grows
 From the soft child to the strong man,
 now soft,
 Now strong as either, and still one sole
 same love,
 Strives with me, no light thing to strive
 withal:
 This love is deep, and natural to man's
 blood,
 And ineffaceable with many tears.
 Yet shall not these rebuke me though I
 die.
 Nor she in that waste world with all her
 dead,
 My mother, among the pale flocks fallen
 as leaves,
 Folds of dead people, and alien from the
 sun;
 Nor lack some bitter comfort, some poor
 praise,
 Being queen, to have borne her daughter
 like a queen,
 Righteous; and though mine own fire burn
 me too,
 She shall have honor and these her sons,
 though dead.
 But all the gods will, all they do, and we
 Not all we would, yet somewhat; and one
 choice
 We have, to live and do just deeds and
 die.

CHORUS.

Terrible words she communes with, and
turns
Swift fiery eyes in doubt against herself,
And murmurs as who talks in dreams with
death.

ALTHÆA.

For the unjust also dieth, and him all men
Hate, and himself abhors the unrighteous-
ness,

And seeth his own dishonor intolerable.
But I being just, doing right upon myself,
Slay mine own soul, and no man born
shames me,

For none constrains nor shall rebuke, being
done,

What none compelled me doing; thus these
things fare

Ah, ah, that such things should so fare; ah
me,

That I am found to do them and endure,
Chosen and constrained to chose, and bear
myself

Mine own wound through mine own flesh
to the heart

Violently stricken, a spoiler and a spoil,

A ruin ruinous, fallen on mine own son.

Ah, ah, for me too as for these; alas,

For that is done that shall be, and mine
hand

Full of the deed, and full of blood mine
eyes,

That shall see never nor touch anything

Save blood unstanch'd and fire unquench-
able.

CHORUS.

What wilt thou do? what ails thee? for
the house

Shakes ruinously; wilt thou bring fire for
it?

ALTHÆA.

Fire in the roofs, and on the lintels fire.

Lo ye, who stand and weave, between the
doors,

There; and blood drips from hand and
thread, and stains

Threshold and raiment and me passing in

Flecked with the sudden sanguine drops of
death.

CHORUS.

Alas that time is stronger than strong men,
Fate than all gods: and these are all fallen
on us.

ALTHÆA.

A little since and I was glad; and now
I never shall be glad or sad again.

CHORUS.

Between two joys a grief grows unaware

ALTHÆA.

A little while and I shall laugh; and then
I shall weep never and laugh not any
more.

CHORUS.

What shall be said? for words are thorns
to grief.

Withhold thyself a little and fear the gods.

ALTHÆA.

Fear died when these were slain; and I am
as dead.

And fear is of the living; these fear none.

CHORUS.

Have pity upon all people for their sake.

ALTHÆA.

It is done now; shall I put back my day?

CHORUS.

And end is come, an end; this is of God.

ALTHÆA.

I am fire, and burn myself; keep clear
of fire.

CHORUS.

The house is broken, is broken; it shall
not stand.

ALTHÆA.

Woe, woe for him that breaketh; and a
rod

Smote it of old, and now the axe is here.

CHORUS.

Not as with sundering of the earth

Nor as with cleaving of the sea

Nor fierce foreshadowings of a birth

Nor flying dreams of death to be

Nor loosening of the large world's girth.

And quickening of the body of night,

And sound of thunder in men's ears

And fire of lightning in men's sight,

Fate, mother of desires and fears,

Bore unto men the law of tears;
 But sudden, an unfathered flame,
 And broken out of night, she shone,
 She, without body, without name,
 In days forgotten and foregone;
 And heaven rang round her as she came
 Like smitten cymbals, and lay bare;
 Clouds and great stars, thunders and
 snows,
 The blue sad fields and folds of air,
 The life that breathes, the life that
 grows,
 All wind, all fire, that burns or blows,
 Even all these knew her: for she is great;
 The daughter of doom, the mother of
 death
 The sister of sorrow; a lifelong weight
 That no man's finger lighteneth,
 Nor any god can lighten fate;
 A landmark seen across the way
 Where one race treads as the other trod;
 An evil sceptre, an evil stay,
 Wrought for a staff, wrought for a rod,
 The bitter jealousy of God.
 For death is deep as the sea,
 And fate as the waves thereof.
 Shall the waves take pity on thee
 Or the south-wind offer thee love?
 Wilt thou take the night for thy day
 Or the darkness for light on thy way
 Till thou say in thine heart, Enough?
 Behold, thou art over fair, thou art over
 wise;
 The sweetness of spring in thine hair, and
 the light in thine eyes.
 The light of the spring in thine eyes, and
 the sound in thine ears;
 Yet thine heart shall wax heavy with sighs
 and thine eyelids with tears.
 Wilt thou cover thine hair with gold; and
 with silver thy feet?
 Hast thou taken the purple to fold thee,
 and made thy mouth sweet?
 Behold, when thy face is made bare, he
 that loved thee shall hate;
 Thy face shall be no more fair at the fall of
 thy fate.
 For thy life shall fall as a leaf and be shed
 as the rain;
 And the veil of thine head shall be grief;
 and the crown shall be pain.

AI THÆA.

Ho ye that wail, and ye that sing, make
 way

Till I be come among you. Hide your
 tears,
 Ye little weepers, and your laughing lips,
 Ye laughers for a little; lo mine eyes
 That outweep heaven at rainiest, and my
 mouth
 That laughs as gods laugh at us. Fate's
 are we,
 Yet fate is ours a breathing-space; yea,
 mine,
 Fate is made mine forever; he is my son,
 My bedfellow, my brother. You strong
 gods,
 Give place unto me; I am as any of you,
 To give life and to take life. Thou old
 earth,
 That hast made man and unmade; thou
 whose mouth
 Looks red from the eaten fruits of thine
 own womb;
 Behold me with what lips upon what food
 I feed and fill my body, even with flesh
 Made of my body. Lo, the fire I lit
 I burn with fire to quench it; yea, with
 flame
 I burn up even the dust and ash thereof.

CHORUS.

Woman, what fire is this thou burnest
 with?

ALTHÆA.

Yea to the bone, yea to the blood and all.

CHORUS.

For this thy face and hair are as one fire.

ALTHÆA.

A tongue that licks and beats upon the
 dust.

CHORUS.

And in thine eyes are hollow light and
 heat.

ALTHÆA.

Of flame not fed with hand or frankin-
 cense.

CHORUS.

I fear thee for the trembling of thine eyes.

ALTHÆA.

Neither with love they tremble nor for
 fear.

CHORUS.

And thy mouth shuddering like a shot
bird.

ALTHÆA.

Not as the bride's mouth when the man
kisses it.

CHORUS.

Nay, but what thing is this thing thou hast
done?

ALTHÆA.

Look, I am silent, speak your eyes for me.

CHORUS.

I see a faint fire lightening from the hall.

ALTHÆA.

Gaze, stretch your eyes, strain till the lids
drop off.

CHORUS.

Flushed pillars down the flickering vesti-
bule.

ALTHÆA.

Stretch with your necks like birds: cry,
chirp as they.

CHORUS.

And a long brand that blackens: and
white dust.

ALTHÆA.

O children, what is this ye see? your eyes
Are blinder than night's face at fall of
moon,

That is my son, my flesh, my fruit of life,
My travail, and the year's weight of my
womb.

Meleager, a fire enkindled of mine hands,
And of mine hands extinguished; this is he.

CHORUS.

O gods, what word has flown out at thy
mouth?

ALTHÆA.

I did this and I say this and I die.

CHORUS.

Death stands upon the doorway of thy lips,
And in thy mouth has death set up his
house.

ALTHÆA.

O death, a little, a little while, sweet
death,
Until I see the brand burnt down and die.

CHORUS.

She reels as any reed under the wind,
And cleaves unto the ground with stagger-
ing feet.

ALTHÆA.

Girls, one thing will I say and hold my
peace.

I that did this will weep not nor cry out,
Cry ye and weep: I will not call on gods,
Call ye on them; I will not pity man,
Shew ye your pity. I know not if I
live;

Save that I feel the fire upon my face
And on my cheek the burning of a brand.
Yea the smoke bites me, yea I drink the
steam

With nostril and with eyelid and with lip
Insatiate and intolerant; and mine hands
Burn, and fire feeds upon mine eyes; I
reel

As one made drunk with living, whence
he draws

Drunken delight; yet I though mad for
joy,

Loathe my long living and am waxen red
As with the shadow of shed blood; be-
hold,

I am kindled with the flames that fade in
him,

I am swollen with subsiding of his veins,
I am flooded with his ebbing; my lit eyes
Flame with the falling fire that leaves his
lids

Bloodless; my cheek is luminous with
blood

Because his face is ashen. Yet, O child,
Son, first-born, fairest—O sweet mouth,
sweet eyes,

That drew my life out through my suckling
breast,

That shone and clove my heart through,—
O soft knees

Clinging, O tender treadings of soft feet,
Cheeks waam with little kissings,—O child,
child,

What have we made each other? Lo, I
felt

Thy weight cleave to me, a burden of
beauty, O son,

Thy cradled brows and loveliest loving
lips,

The floral hair, the little lightening eyes,
And all thy goodly glory; with mine
hands

Delicately I feed thee, with my tongue
Tenderly spake, saying, Verily in God's
time,

For all the little likeness of thy limbs,
Son, I shall make thee a kingly man to
fight,

A lordly leader; and hear before I die,
"She bore the goodliest sword of all the
world,"

Oh! oh! For all my life turns round on
me;

I am severed from myself, my name is
gone.

My name that was a healing, it is changed,
My name is a consuming. From this
time,

Though mine eyes reach to the end of all
these things,

My lips shall not unfasten till I die.

SEMICHORUS.

She has filled with sighing the city,

And the ways thereof with tears;

She arose, she girdled her sides,

She set her face as a bride's;

She wept, and she had no pity;

Trembled and felt no fears.

SEMICHORUS.

Her eyes were clear as the sun,

Her brows were fresh as the day;

She girdled herself with gold,

Her robes were manifold;

But the days of her worship are done,

Her praise is taken away.

SEMICHORUS.

For she set her hand to the fire;

With her mouth she kindled the same;

As the mouth of a flute-player,

So was the mouth of her;

With the might of her strong desire

She blew the breath of the flame.

SEMICHORUS.

She set her hand to the wood,

She took the fire in her hand;

As one who is nigh to death,

She panted with strange breath;

She opened her lips unto blood,

She breathed and kindled the brand

SEMICHORUS.

As wood-dove newly shot,

She sobbed and lifted her breast;

She sighed and covered her eyes,

Filling her lips with sighs;

She sighed, she withdrew herself not,

She refrained not, taking not rest;

SEMICHORUS.

But as the wind which is drouth,

And as the air which is death,

As storm that severeth ships,

Her breath severing her lips,

The breath came forth of her mouth

And the fire came forth of her breath.

SECOND MESSENGER.

Queen, and you maidens, there is come
on us

A thing more deadly than the face of
death;

Meleager the good lord is as one slain.

SEMICHORUS.

Without sword, without sword is he
stricken;

Slain, and slain without hand.

SECOND MESSENGER.

For as keen ice divided of the sun

His limbs divide, and as thawed snow the
flesh

Thaws from off all his body to the hair.

SEMICHORUS.

He wastes as the embers quicken;

With the brand he fades as a brand.

SECOND MESSENGER.

Even while they sang and all drew hither
and he

Lifted both hands to crown the Arcadian's
hair

And fix the looser leaves, both hands fell
down.

SEMICHORUS.

With rending of cheek and of hair

Lament ye, mourn for him, weep.

SECOND MESSENGER.

Straightway the crown slid off and smote
on earth.

First fallen; and he, grasping his own hair,
groaned

And cast his raiment round his face and
fell.

SEMICHORUS.

Alas for visions that were,
And soothsayings spoken in sleep.

SECOND MESSENGER.

But the king twitched his reins in and leapt
down
And caught him, crying out twice, "O
child," and thrice
So that men's eyelids thickened with their
tears.

SEMICHORUS.

Lament with a long lamentation,
Cry, for an end is at hand.

SECOND MESSENGER.

O son, he said, son, lift thine eyes, draw
breath,
Pity me; but Meleager with sharp lips
Gasped, and his face waxed like as sun-
burnt grass.

SEMICHORUS.

Cry aloud, O thou kingdom, O nation,
O stricken, a ruinous land.

SECOND MESSENGER.

Whereat king CEnus, straightening feeble
knees.
With feeble hands heaved up a lessening
weight,
And laid him sadly in strange hands, and
wept.

SEMICHORUS.

Thou art smitten, her lord, her desire,
Thy dear blood wasted as rain.

SECOND MESSENGER.

And they with tears and rendings of the
beard
Bear hither a breathing body, wept upon.
And lightening at each footfall, sick to
death.

SEMICHORUS.

Thou madest thy sword as a fire,
With fire for a sword thou art slain.

SECOND MESSENGER.

And lo the feast turned funeral and the
crowns

Fallen; and the huntress and the hunter
trapped;
And weeping and changed faces and veiled
hair.

MELEAGER.

Let your hands meet
Round the weight of my head
Lift ye my feet

As the feet of the dead;
For the flesh of my body is molten, the
limbs of it molten as lead.

CHORUS.

O thy luminous face,
Thine imperious eyes !
O the grief, O the grace,
As of the day when it dies !
Who is this bending over thee, lord, with
tears and suppression of sighs !

MELEA

Is a bride so fair ?
Is a maid so meek ?
With unchapleted hair
With unfileted cheek,
Atalanta, the pure among women, whose
name is as blessing to speak.

ATALANTA.

I would that with feet,
Unsaddled, unshod.
Overbold, overfleet,
I had swum not nor trod
From Arcadia to Calydon, northward, a
blast of the envy of God.

MELEAGER.

Unto each man his fate;
Unto each as he saith
In whose fingers the weight
Of the world is as breath;
Yet I would that in clamor of battle mine
hands had laid hold upon death.

CHORUS.

Not with cleaving of shields
And their clash in thine ear,
When the lord of fought fields
Breaketh spearshaft from spear,
Thou art broken, our lord, thou art broken,
with travail and labor and fear.

MELEAGER.

Would God he had found me
Beneath fresh boughs !

Would God he had bound me
Unawares in mine house,
With light in mine eyes, and songs in my
lips, and a crown on my brows !

CHORUS.

Whence art thou sent from us ?
Whither thy goal ?
How art thou rent from us,
Thou that wert whole,
As with severing of eyelids and eyes, as
with sundering of body and soul !

MELEAGER.

My heart is within me
As an ash in the fire;
Whosoever hath seen me,
Without lute, without lyre,
Shall sing of me grievous things, even
things that were ill to desire.

CHORUS.

Who shall raise thee
From the house of the dead ?
Or what man praise thee
That thy praise may be said ?
Alas thy beauty ! alas thy body ! alas
thine head !

MELEAGER.

But thou, O mother,
That dreamer of dreams,
Wilt thou bring forth another
To feel the sun's beams
When I move among shadows a shadow,
and wail by impassable streams ?

CENEUS.

What thing wilt thou leave me
Now this thing is done ?
A man wilt thou give me,
A son for my son,
For the light of mine eyes, the desire of
my life, the desirable one ?

CHORUS.

Thou wert glad above others,
Yea, fair beyond word;
Thou wert glad among mothers;
For each man that heard
Of thee, praise there was added unto thee,
as wings to the feet of a bird.

CENEUS.

Who shall give back
Thy face of old years,

With travail made black,
Grown gray among fears,
Mother of sorrow, mother of cursing,
mother of tears ?

MELEAGER.

Though thou art as fire
Fed with fuel in vain,
My delight, desire,
Is more chaste than the rain,
More pure than the dewfall, more holy
than stars are that live without stain.

ATALANTA.

I would that as water
My life's blood had thawed,
Or as winter's wan daughter
Leaves lowland and lawn
Spring-stricken, or ever mine eyes had be-
held thee made dark in thy dawn.

CHORUS.

When thou dravest the men
Of the chosen of Thrace,
None turned him again
Nor endured he thy face
Clothed round with the blush of the battle,
with light from a terrible place,

CENEUS.

Thou shouldst die as he dies
For whom none sheddeth tears ;
Filling thine eyes
And fulfilling thine ears.
With the brilliance of battle, the bloom
and the beauty, the splendor of spears.

CHORUS.

In the ears of the world
It is sung, it is told,
And the light thereof hurled
And the noise thereof rolled
From the Acroceranuan snow to the ford
of the fleece of gold.

MELEAGER.

Would God ye could carry me
Forth of all these;
Heap sand and bury me
By the Chersonese
Where the thundering Bosphorus answers
the thunder of Pontic seas.

CENEUS.

Dost thou mock at our praise
And the singing begun

And the men of strange days
 Praising my son
 In the folds of the hills of home, high
 places of Calydon ?

MELEAGER.

For the dead man no home is;
 Ah, better to be
 What the flower of the foam is
 In fields of the sea,
 That the sea-waves might be as my rai-
 ment, the gulf-stream a garment for me.

CHORUS.

Who shall seek thee and bring
 And restore thee thy day,
 When the dove dipt her wing
 And the oars won their way,
 Where the narrowing Symplegades whitened
 the straits of Propontis with spray ?

MELEAGER.

Will ye crown me my tomb
 Or exalt me my name,
 Now my spirits consume
 Now my flesh is a flame ?
 Let the sea slake it once, and men speak
 of me sleeping to praise me or shame.

CHORUS.

Turn back now, turn thee,
 As who turns him to wake;
 Though the life in thee burn thee,
 Couldst thou bathe it and slake
 Where the sea-ridge of Helle hangs heavier,
 and east upon west waters break ?

MELEAGER.

Would the winds blow me back
 Or the waves hurl me home ?
 Ah, to touch in the track
 Where the pine learnt to roam
 Cold girdles and crowns of the sea-gods,
 cool blossoms of water and foam !

CHORUS.

The gods may release
 That they made fast;
 Thy soul shall have ease
 In thy limbs at the last;
 But what shall they give thee for life, sweet
 life that is overpast ?

MELEAGER.

Not the life of men's veins,
 Not of flesh that conceives;
 But the grace that remains,
 The fair beauty that cleaves
 To the life of the rains in the grasses, the
 life of the dew on the leaves.

CHORUS.

Thou wert helmsman and chief;
 Wilt thou turn in an hour,
 Thy limbs to the leaf,
 Thy face to the flower,
 Thy blood to the water, thy soul to the
 gods who divide and devour ?

MELEAGER.

The years are hungry,
 They wail all their days;
 The gods wax angry
 And weary of praise;
 And who shall bridle their lips ? and who
 shall straiten their ways ?

CHORUS.

The gods guard over us
 With sword and with rod;
 Weaving shadow to cover us,
 Heaping the sod,
 That law may fulfil herself wholly, to
 darken man's face before God.

MELEAGER.

O holy head of Ceneus, lo thy son
 Guiltless, yet red from alien guilt, yet foul
 With kinship of contaminated lives,
 Lo for their blood I die; and mine own
 blood
 For bloodshedding of mine is mixed there-
 with,
 That death may not discern me from my
 kin.
 Yet with clean heart I die and faultless
 hand,
 Not shamefully; thou therefore of thy
 love
 Salute me, and bid fare among the dead
 Well, as the dead fare; for the best man
 dead
 Fares sadly; nathless I now faring well
 Pass without fear where nothing is to fear,
 Having thy love about me and thy good-
 will,
 O father, among dark places and men
 dead.

GENEUS.

Child, I salute thee with sad heart and
tears,
And bid thee comfort, being a perfect
man
In fight, and honorable in the house of
peace.
The gods give thee fair wage and dues of
death,
And me brief days and ways to come at
thee.

MELEAGER.

Pray thou thy days be long before thy
death,
And full of ease and kingdom; seeing in
death
There is no comfort and none aftergrowth,
Nor shall one thence look up and see day's
dawn
Nor light upon the land whither I go.
Live thou and take thy fill of days and
die
When thy day comes; and make not much
of death
Lest ere thy day thou reap an evil thing.
Thou, too, the bitter mother and mother-
plague
Of this my weary body,—thou too, queen,
The source and end, the sower and the
scythe,
The rain that ripens and the drought that
slays,
The sand that swallows and the spring
that feeds,
To make me and unmake me,—thou, I
say,
Althæa, since my father's ploughshare,
drawn
Through fatal seedland of a female field,
Furrowed thy body, whence a wheaten
ear
Strong from the sun and fragrant from the
rains
I sprang and cleft the closure of thy
womb,
Mother, I dying with unforgetful tongue
Hail thee as holy and worship thee as
just
Who art unjust and unholy; and with my
knees
Would worship, but thy fire and subtlety,
Dissundering them, devour me; for these
limbs

Are as light dust and crumbings from
mine urn
Before the fire has touched them; and my
face
As a dead leaf or dead foot's mark on
snow,
And all this body a broken barren tree
That was so strong, and all this flower of
life
Disbranched and desecrated miserably,
And diminished all that god-like muscle and
night
And lesser than a man's: for all my veins
Fail me, and all mine ashen life burns
down.
I would thou hadst let me live; but gods
averse,
But fortune, and the fiery feet of change,
And time, these would not, these tread out
my life,
These, and not thou; me, too, thou hast
loved, and I
Thee; but this death was mixed with all
my life,
Mine end with my beginning; and this
law,
This only, slays me, and not my mother at
all.
And let no brother or sister grieve too
sore,
Nor melt their hearts out on me with their
tears,
Since extreme love and sorrowing over-
much
Vex the great gods, and overloving men
Slay and are slain for love's sake; and this
house
Shall bear much better children; why
should these
Weep? but in patience let them live their
lives
And mine pass by forgotten: thou alone,
Mother, thou sole and only, thou not
these,
Keep me in mind a little when I die
Because I was thy first-born; let thy soul
Pity me, pity even me gone hence and
dead,
Though thou wert wroth, and though thou
bear again
Much happier sons, and all men later
born
Exceedingly excel me; yet do thou
Forget not, nor think shame; I was thy
son.

Time was I did not shame thee; and time
 was
 I thought to live and make thee honorable
 With deeds as great as these men's; but
 they live,
 These, and I die; and what thing should
 have been
 Surely I know not; yet I charge thee, see-
 ing
 I am dead already, love me not the less,
 Me, O my mother; I charge thee by these
 gods,
 My father's, and that holier breast of
 thine,
 By these that see me dying, and that which
 nursed,
 Love me not less, thy first-born: though
 grief come,
 Grief only, of me, and of all these great
 joy,
 And shall come always to thee; for thou
 knowest
 O mother, O breasts that bare me, for ye
 know
 O sweet head of my mother, sacred eyes,
 Ye know my soul albeit I sinned, ye
 know
 Albeit I kneel not neither touch thy
 knees,
 But with my lips I kneel, and with my
 heart
 I fall about thy feet and worship thee.
 And ye, farewell now, all my friends; and
 ye,
 Kinsmen, much younger and glorious
 more than I
 Sons of my mother's sister; and all fare-
 well
 That were in Colchis with me, and bare
 down
 The waves and wars that met us and though
 times
 Change, and though now I be not any-
 thing,
 Forget not me among you, what I did
 In my good time; for even by all those
 days,
 Those days and this, and your own living
 souls,
 And by the light and luck of you that live,
 And by this miserable spoil, and me
 Dying, I beseech you, let my name not
 die.

But thou, dear, touch me with thy rose-like
 hands,
 And fasten up mine eyelids with thy
 mouth,
 A bitter kiss; and grasp me with thine
 arms
 Printing with heavy lips my light waste
 flesh,
 Made light and thin by heavy-handed
 fate,
 And with thine holy maiden eyes drop
 dew,
 Drop tears for dew upon me who am
 dead,
 Me who have loved thee; seeing without
 sin done
 I am gone down to the empty weary
 house
 Where no flesh is nor beauty nor swift
 eyes
 Nor sound of mouth nor might of hands
 and feet,
 But thou, dear, hide my body with thy
 veil,
 And with thy raiment cover foot and head,
 And stretch thyself upon me and touch
 hands
 With hands and lips with lips: be pitiful
 As thou art maiden perfect; let no man
 Defile me to despise me, saying, This
 man
 Die woman-wise, a woman's offering, slain
 Through female fingers in his woof of life,
 Dishonorable; for thou hast honored me,
 And now for God's sake kiss me once and
 twice
 And let me go; for the night gathers me
 And in the night shall no man gather
 fruit.

ATALANTA.

Hail thou: but I with heavy face and
 feet
 Turn homeward and am gone out of thine
 eyes.

CHORUS.

Who shall contend with his lords
 Or cross them or do them wrong?
 Who shall bind them as with cords?
 Who shall tame them as with song?
 Who shall smite them as with swords?
 For the hands of their kingdom are
 strong.

SONGS OF TWO NATIONS.

I. A SONG OF ITALY.

II. ODE ON THE PROCLAMATION OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

III. DIRÆ.

*I saw the double-featured statue stand
Of Memnon or of Janus, half with night
Veiled, and fast bound with iron half with light
Crowned, holding all men's future in his hand.*

*And all the old westward face of time grown grey
Was writ with cursing and inscribed for death
But on the face that met the morning's breath
Fear died of hope as darkness dies of day.*

INSCRIBED

WITH ALL DEVOTION AND REVERENCE

TO

JOSEPH MAZZINI.

A SONG OF ITALY.

UPON a windy night of stars that fell
 At the wind's spoken spell,
 Swept with sharp strokes of agonizing
 light
 From the clear gulf of night,
 Between the fixed and fallen glories one
 Against my vision shone,
 More fair and fearful and divine than they
 That measure night and day,
 And worthier worship; and within mine
 eyes
 The formless folded skies
 Took shape and were unfolded like as
 flowers.
 And I beheld the hours
 As maidens, and the days as laboring men,
 And the soft nights again
 As wearied women to their own souls wed,
 And ages as the dead.
 And over these living, and them that died,
 From one to the other side
 A lordlier light than comes of earth or air
 Made the world's future fair.
 A woman like to love in face, but not
 A thing of transient lot—
 And like to hope, but having hold on
 truth—
 And like to joy or youth,
 Save that upon the rock her feet were
 set—
 And like what men forget,
 Faith, innocence, high thought, laborious
 peace—
 And yet like none of these,
 Being not as these are mortal, but with
 eyes
 That sounded the deep skies
 And clove like wings or arrows their clear
 way
 Through night and dawn and day—
 So fair a presence over star and sun
 Stood, making these as one.
 For in the shadow of her shape were all
 Darkened and held in thrall,
 So mightier rose she past them; and I felt
 Whose form, whose likeness knelt
 With covered hair and face and clasped
 her knees;

And knew the first of these
 Was Freedom, and the second Italy.
 And what sad words said she
 For mine own grief I knew not, nor had
 heart
 Therewith to bear my part
 And set my songs to sorrow; nor to hear
 How tear by sacred tear
 Fell from her eyes as flowers or notes that
 fall
 In some slain feaster's hall
 Where in mid music and melodious breath
 Men singing have seen death.
 So fair, so lost, so sweet she knelt; or so
 In our lost eyes below
 Seemed to us sorrowing; and her speech
 being said,
 Fell, as one who falls dead.
 And for a little she too wept, who stood
 Above the dust and blood
 And thrones and troubles of the world;
 then spake,
 As who bids dead men wake.
 'Because the years were heavy on thy
 head;
 Because dead things are dead;
 Because thy chosen on hill-side, city and
 plain
 Are shed as drops of rain;
 Because all earth was black, all heaven
 was blind,
 And we cast out of mind;
 Because men wept, saying *Freedom*, know-
 ing of thee,
 Child, that thou wast not free:
 Because wherever blood was not shame was
 Where thy pure foot did pass;
 Because on Promethean rocks distent
 Thee fouler eagles rent;
 Because a serpent stains with slime and
 foam
 This that is not thy Rome;
 Child of my womb, whose limbs were made
 in me,
 Have I forgotten thee?
 In all thy dreams through all these years
 on wing,

Hast thou dreamed such a thing?
 The mortal mother-bird outsoars her nest,
 The child outgrows the breast;
 But suns as stars shall fall from heaven and
 cease,
 Ere we twain be as these;
 Yea, utmost skies forget their utmost sun,
 Ere we twain be not one.
 My lesser jewels sewn on skirt and hem,
 I have no heed of them
 Obscured and flawed by sloth or craft or
 power;
 But thou, that wast my flower,
 The blossom bound between my brows and
 worn
 In sight of even and morn
 From the last ember of the flameless west
 To the dawn's baring breast—
 I were not Freedom if thou wert not free,
 Nor thou wert Italy.
 O mystic rose ingrained with blood, im-
 pearled
 With tears of all the world!
 The torpor of their blind brute-ridden
 trance
 Kills England and chills France;
 And Spain sobs hard through strangling
 blood; and snows
 Hide the huge eastern woes.
 But thou, twin-born with morning, nursed
 of noon,
 And blessed of star and moon!
 What shall avail to assail thee any more,
 From sacred shore to shore?
 Have Time and Love not knelt down at
 thy feet,
 Thy sore, thy soiled, thy sweet,
 Fresh from the flints and mire of murderous
 ways
 And dust of travelling days?
 Hath Time not kissed them, Love not
 washed them fair,
 And wiped with tears and hair?
 Though God forget thee, I will not forget;
 Though heaven and earth be set
 Against thee, O unconquerable child,
 Abused, abased, reviled,
 Lift thou not less from no funereal bed
 Thine undishonored head;
 Love thou not less, by lips of thine once
 prest,
 This my now barren breast;
 Seek thou not less, being well assured
 thereof,
 O child, my latest love.

For now the barren bosom shall bear fruit,
 Songs leap from lips long mute,
 And with my milk the mouths of nations
 fed
 Again be glad and red
 That were worn white with hunger and
 sorrow and thirst;
 And thou, most fair and first,
 Thou whose warm hands and sweet live
 lips I feel
 Upon me for a seal,
 Thou whose least looks, whose smiles and
 little sighs,
 Whose passionate pure eyes,
 Whose dear fair limbs that neither bonds
 could bruise
 Nor hate of men misuse,
 Whose flower-like breath and bosom, O my
 child,
 O mine and undefiled,
 Fill with such tears as burn like bitter
 wine
 These mother's eyes of mine,
 Thrill with huge passions and primeval
 pains
 The fulness of my veins.
 O sweetest head seen higher than any
 stands,
 I touch thee with mine hands,
 I lay my lips upon thee, O thou most
 sweet,
 To lift thee on thy feet
 And with the fire of mine to fill thine eyes;
 I say unto thee, Arise.
 She ceased, and heaven was full of flame
 and sound,
 And earth's old limbs unbound
 Shone and waxed warm with fiery dew and
 seed
 Shed through her at this her need;
 And highest in heaven, a mother and full
 of grace,
 With no more covered face,
 With no more lifted hands and bended
 knees,
 Rose, as from sacred seas
 Love, when old time was full of plenteous
 springs,
 That fairest-born of things,
 The land that holds the rest in tender
 thrall
 For love's sake in them all,
 That binds with words and holds with eyes
 and hands

All hearts in all men's lands.
So died the dream whence rose the live
desire

That here takes form and fire,
A spirit from the splendid grave of sleep
Risen, that ye should not weep,
Should not weep more nor ever, O ye that
hear

And ever have held her dear,
Seeing now indeed she weeps not who
wept sore,

And sleeps not any more.
Hearken ye towards her, O people exalt
your eyes;
Is this a thing that dies?

Italia! by the passion of the pain
That bent and rent thy chain;
Italia! by the breaking of the bands,
The shaking of the lands;
Beloved, O men's mother, O men's queen,
Arise, appear, be seen!

Arise, array thyself in manifold
Queen's raiment of wrought gold;
With girdles of green freedom, and with
red

Roses, and white snow shed
Above the flush and frondage of the hills
That all thy deep dawn fills
And all thy clear night veils and warms
with wings

Spread till the morning sings;
The rose of resurrection, and the bright
Breast lavish of the light,
The lady lily like the snowy sky
Ere the stars wholly die;

As red as blood, and whiter than a wave
Flowers grown as from thy grave,
From the green fruitful grass in Maytime
hot,

Thy grave, where thou art not.
Gather the grass and weave, in sacred
sign

Of the ancient earth divine,
The holy heart of things, the seed of
birth,

The mystical warm earth.
O thou her flower of flowers, with treble
braid

Be thy sweet head arrayed,
In witness of her mighty motherhood
Who bore thee and found thee good,
Her fairest-born of children, on whose
head

Her green and white and red

Are hope and light and life, inviolate
Of any latter fate.

Fly, O our flag, through deep Italian
air,

Above the flags that were,
The dusty shreds of shameful battle-flags
Trampled and rent in rags,
As withering woods in autumn's bitterest
breath

Yellow, and black as death;
Black as crushed worms that sicken in the
sense,

And yellow as pestilence.
Fly, green as summer and red as dawn and
white

As the live heart of light,
The blind bright womb of color unborn,
that brings

Forth all fair forms of things,
As freedom all fair forms of nations dyed
In divers-colored pride.

Fly, fleet as wind on every wind that blows
Between her seas and snows,
From Alpine white, from Tuscan green,
and where

Vesuvius reddens air.

Fly! and let all men see it, and all kings
wail,

And priests wax faint and pale,
And the cold hordes that moan in misty
places

And the funereal races
And the sick serfs of lands that wait and
wane

See thee and hate thee in vain.
In the clear laughter of all winds and
waves,

In the blown grass of graves,
In the long sound of fluctuant boughs of
trees,

In the broad breath of seas,
Bid the sound of thy flying folds be
heard;

And as a spoken word
Full of that fair god and that merciless
Who rends the Pythoness,

So be the sound and so the fire that saith
She feels her ancient breath
And the old blood move in her immortal
veins.

Strange travail and strong pains,
Our mother, hast thou borne these many
years
While thy pure blood and tears

Mixed with the Tyrrhene and the Adrian
sea;

Light things were said of thee,
As of one buried deep among the dead;
Yea, she hath been, they said,
She was when time was younger, and is
not:

The very cerecloths rot
That flutter in the dusty wind of death,
Not moving with her breath;
Far seasons and forgotten years enfold
Her dead corpse old and cold
With many windy winters and pale
springs:

She is none of this world's things.
Though her dead head like a live garland
wear

The golden-growing hair
That flows over her breast down to her
feet,

Dead queens, whose life was sweet
In sight of all men living, have been
found

So cold, so clad, so crowned,
With all things faded and with one thing
fair,

Their old immortal hair,
When flesh and bone turned dust at touch
of day:

And she is dead as they.

So men said sadly, mocking; so the slave,
Whose life was his soul's grave:
So, pale or red with change of fast and
feast,

The sanguine-sandalled priest
So the Austrian, when his fortune came to
flood,

And the warm wave was blood;
With wings that widened and with beak
that smote,

So shrieked through either throat
From the hot horror of its northern nest
That double-headed pest;

So, triple-crowned with fear and fraud and
shame,

He of whom treason came,
The herdsman of the Gadarean swine;

So all his ravening kine,
Made fat with poisonous pasture; so not
we,

Mother, beholding thee.
Make answer, O the crown of all our
slain,

Ye that were one, being twain,

Twain brethren, twin-born to the second
birth,

Chosen out of all our earth
To be the prophesying stars that say
How hard is night on day,
Stars in serene and sudden heaven risen
Before the sun break prison
And ere the moon be wasted; fair first
flowers

In that red wreath of ours
Woven with the lives of all whose lives
were shed

To crown their mother's head
With leaves of civic cypress and thick
yew,

Till the olive bind it too,
Olive and laurel and all loftier leaves
That victory wears or weaves
At her fair feet for her beloved brow;
Hear, for she too hears now,
O Pisacane, from Calabrian sands;
O all heroic hands

Close on the sword-hilt, hands of all her
dead;

O many a holy head,
Bowed for her sake even to her reddening
dust;

O chosen, O pure and just,
Who counted for a small thing life's estate,
And died, and made it great;
Ye whose names mix with all her memo-
ries; ye

Who rather chose to see
Death, than our more intolerable things;

Thou whose name withers kings,
Agésilao; thou too, O chieftiest thou,

The slayer of splendid brow,
Laid where the lying lips of fear deride
The foiled tyrannicide,

Foiled, fallen, slain, scorned, and happy;
being in fame,

Felice, like thy name,
Not like thy fortune; father of the fight,
Having in hand our light.

Ah, happy! for that sudden-swerving
hand

Flung light on all thy land,
Yea, lit blind France with compulsory
ray,

Driven down a righteous way;
Ah, happiest! for from thee the wars be-
gan,

From thee the fresh springs ran;
From thee the lady land that queens the
earth

Gat as she gave new birth,

Gat as she gave new birth,

O sweet mute mouths, O all fair dead of
 ours,
 Fair in our eyes as flowers,
 Fair without feature, vocal without voice,
 Strong without strength, rejoice!
 Hear it with ears that hear not, and on
 eyes
 That see not let it rise,
 Rise as a sundawn; be it as dew that
 drips
 On dumb and dusty lips;
 Eyes have ye not, and see it; neither ears,
 And there is none but hears.
 This is the same for whom ye bled and
 wept;
 She was not dead, but slept.
 This is that very Italy which was
 And is and shall not pass.

But thou, though all were not well done,
 O chief,
 Must thou take shame or grief?
 Because one man is not as thou or ten,
 Must thou take shame for men?
 Because the supreme sunrise is not yet,
 Is the young dew not wet?
 Wilt thou not yet abide a little while,
 Soul without fear or guile,
 Mazzini,—O our prophet, O our priest,
 A little while at least?
 A little hour of doubt and of control,
 Sustain thy sacred soul;
 Withhold thine heart, our father, but an
 hour;
 Is it not here, the flower,
 Is it not blown and fragrant from the root,
 And shall not be the fruit?
 Thy children, even thy people thou hast
 made,
 Thine, with thy words arrayed,
 Clothed with thy thoughts and girt with
 thy desires,
 Yearn up toward thee as fires.
 Art thou not father, O father, of all these?
 From thine own Genoese
 To where of nights the lower extreme
 lagoon
 Feels its Venetian moon,
 Nor suckling's mouth nor mother's breast
 set free
 But hath that grace through thee.
 The milk of life on death's unnatural brink
 Thou gavest them to drink,
 The natural milk of freedom; and again
 They drank, and they were men.

The wine and honey of freedom and of
 faith
 They drank, and cast off death.
 Bear with them now; thou art holier: yet
 endure,
 Till they as thou be pure.
 Their swords at least that stemmed half
 Austria's tide
 Bade all its bulk divide;
 Else, though fate bade them for a breath's
 space fall,
 She had not fallen at all.
 Not by their hands they made time's
 promise true;
 Not by their hands, but through.
 Nor on Custoza ran their blood to waste,
 Nor fell their fame defaced
 Whom stormiest Adria with turgid
 tides
 Whirls undersea and hides.
 Not his, who from the sudden
 deck
 Looked over death and wreck
 To where the mother's bosom shone, who
 smiled
 As he, so dying, her child;
 For he smiled surely, dying, to mix his
 death
 With her memorial breath;
 Smiled, being most sure of her, that in no
 wise,
 Die whoso will, she dies:
 And she smiled surely, fair and far above,
 Wept not, but smiled for love.
 Thou too, O splendor of the sudden
 sword
 That drove the crews abhorred
 From Naples and the siren-footed strand
 Flash from thy master's hand
 Shine from the middle summer of the
 seas
 To the old Æolides,
 Outshine their fiery fumes of burning
 night,
 Sword, with thy midday light;
 Flame as a beacon from the Tyrrhene
 foam
 To the rent heart of Rome,
 From the island of her lover and thy lord,
 Her saviour and her sword,
 In the fierce year of failure and of fame,
 Art thou not yet the same
 That wast as lightning swifter than all
 wings
 In the blind face of kings?

When priests took counsel to devise despair,
And princes to forswear,

She clasped thee, O her sword and flag-bearer
And staff and shield to her,

O Garibaldi; need was hers and grief,
Of thee and of the chief,

And of another girt in arms to stand
As good of hope and hand,

As high of soul and happy, albeit indeed
The heart should burn and bleed,

So but the spirit shake not nor the breast
Swerve, but abide its rest.

As theirs did and as thine, though ruin
clomb

The highest wall of Rome,
Though treason stained and spilt her lustral
water,

And slaves led slaves to slaughter,
And priests, praying and slaying, watched
them pass

From a strange France, alas,
That was not freedom; yet when these
were past,

Thy sword and thou stood fast,
Till new men seeing thee where Sicilian
waves

Hear now no sound of slaves,
And where thy sacred blood is fragrant still
Upon the Bitter Hill,

Seeing by that blood one country saved and
stained,

Less loved thee crowned than chained,
And less now only than the chief: for he,
Father of Italy,

Uppore in holy hands the babe new-born
Through loss and sorrow and scorn,

Of no man led, of many men reviled;
Till lo, the new-born child

Gone from between his hands, and in its
place,

Lo, the fair mother's face.

Blessed is he of all men, being in one
As father to her and son,

Blessed of all men living, that he found
Her weak limbs bared and bound,

And in his arms and in his bosom bore,
And as a garment wore

Her weight of want, and as a royal dress
Put on her weariness.

As in faith's hoariest histories men read,

The strong man bore at need

Through roaring rapids when all heaven
was wild

The likeness of a child

That still waxed greater and heavier as he
trod,

And altered, and was God.

Praise him, O winds that move the molten
air,

O light of days that were,

And light of days that shall be; land and
sea,

And heaven and Italy:

Praise him, O storm and summer, shore
and wave,

O skies and every grave;

O weeping hopes, O memories beyond
tears,

O many and murmuring years,

O sounds far off in time and visions far,

O sorrow with thy star;

And joy with all thy beacons; ye that
mourn,

And ye whose light is born;

O fallen faces, and O souls arisen,

Praise him from tomb and prison,

Praise him from heaven and sunlight; and
ye floods,

And windy waves of woods;

Ye valleys and wild vineyards, ye lit lakes;
And happier hillsides brakes,

Untrampled by the cursed feet that trod

Fields golden from their god,

Fields of their god forsaken, whereof none
Sees his face in the sun,

Hears his voice from the floweriest wilder-
ness;

And, barren of his tresses,

Ye bays unplucked and laurels unen-
twined,

That no men break or bind,

And myrtles long forgetful of the sword,

And olives unadored,

Wisdom and love, white hands that save
and slay,

Praise him; and ye as they,

Praise him, O gracious might of dews and
rains

That feed the purple plains,

O sacred sunbeams bright as bare steel
drawn,

O cloud and fire and dawn;

Red hills of flame, white Alps, green
Apennines,

Banners of blowing pines,

Standards of stormy snows, flags of light
leaves,

Three wherewith Freedom weaves

One ensign that once woven and once unfurled

Makes day of all a world,
Makes blind their eyes who knew not, and
outbraves

The waste of iron waves;
Ye fields of yellow fullness, ye fresh foun-
tains,

And mists of many mountains;
Ye moons and seasons, and ye days and
nights;

Ye starry-headed heights,
And gorges melting sunward from the
snow,

And all strong streams that flow,
Tender as tears, and fair as faith, and
pure

As hearts made sad and sure
At once by many sufferings and one love;
O mystic deathless dove

Held to the heart of earth and in her
hands

Cherished, O fly of lands,
White rose of time, dear dream of praises
past—

For such as these thou wast,
That art as eagles setting to the sun,
As fawns that leap and run,
As a sword carven with keen floral gold,
Sword for an armed god's hold,
Flower for a crowned god's forehead—O
our land,

Reach forth thine holiest hand,
O mother of many sons and memories,
Stretch out thine hand to his
That raised and gave thee life to run and
leap

When thou wast full of sleep,
That touched and stung thee with young
blood and breath

When thou wast hard on death.

Praise him, O all her cities and her crowns,
Her towers and thrones of towns;
O noblest Brescia, scarred from foot to
head

And breast-deep in the dead,
Praise him from all the glories of the graves
That yellow Mela laves

With gentle and golden water, whose fair
flood

Ran wider with thy blood :
Praise him, O born of that heroic breast,
O nursed thereat and blest,

Vercna, fairer than thy mother fair,
But not more brave to bear :

Praise him, O Milan, whose imperial tread
Bruised once the German head ;

Whose might, by northern swords left
desolate,

Set foot on fear and fate :
Praise him, O long mute mouth of melodies,
Mantua, with louder keys,
With mightier chords of music even than
rolled

From the large harps of old,
When thy sweet singer of golden throat and
tongue,

Praising his tyrant, sung ;
Though now thou sing not as of other days,
Learn late a better praise.

Not with the sick sweet lips of slaves that
sing,

Praise thou no priest or king,
Nobrow-bound laurel of discoloured leaf,
But him, the crownless chief.

Praise him, O star of sun-forgotten times,
Among their creeds and crimes

That wast a fire of witness in the night,
Padua, the wise men's light :

Praise him, O sacred Venice, and the sea
That now exults through thee,
Full of the mighty morning and the sun,
Free of things dead and done ;

Praise him from all the years of thy great
grief,

That shook thee like a leaf
With winds and snows of torment, rain that
fell

Red as the rains of hell,
Storms of black thunder and of yellow flame,
And all ill things but shame ;

Praise him with all thy holy heart and
strength ;

Through thy walls' breadth and length
Praise him with all thy people, that their
voice

Bid the strong soul rejoice,
The fair clear supreme spirit beyond stain,
Pure as the depth of pain,

High as the head of suffering, and secure
As all things that endure.

More than thy blind lord of an hundred
years

Whose name our memory hears,
Home-bound from harbours of the Byzantine
Made tributary of thine,

Praise him who gave no gifts from oversea,
But gave thyself to thee.

O mother Genoa, through all years that run,
More than that other son,

Who first beyond the seas of sunset prest
 Even to the unfooted west,
 Whose black-blown flag scared from their
 sheltering seas
 The unknown Atlantides,
 And as flame climbs through cloud and
 vapour clomb
 Through streams of storm and foam,
 Till half in sight they saw land heave and
 swim—
 More than this man praise him.
 One found a world new-born from virgin
 sea ;
 And one found Italy.
 O heavenliest Florence, from the mouths of
 flowers
 Fed by melodious hours,
 From each sweet mouth that kisses light
 and air,
 Thou whom thy fate made fair,
 As a bound vine or any flowering tree,
 Praise him who made thee free.
 For no grape-gatherers trampling out the
 wine
 Tread thee, the fairest vine ;
 For no man binds thee, no man bruises,
 none
 Does with thee as these have done.
 From where spring hears loud through ner
 long lit vales
 Triumphant nightingales,
 In many a fold of fiery foliage hidden.
 Withheld as things forbidden,
 But clamorous with innumerable delight
 In May's red, green, and white,
 In the far-floated standard of the spring,
 That bids men also sing,
 Our flower of flags, our witness that are
 free,
 Our lamp for land and sea ;
 From where Majano feels through corn and
 vine
 Spring move and melt as wine,
 And Fiesole's embracing arms enclose
 The immeasurable rose ;
 From hill-sides plumed with pine, and
 heights wind-worn
 That feel the reflux morn,
 Or where the moon's face warm and
 passionate
 Burns, and men's hearts grow great,
 And the swoln eyelids labor with sweet
 tears,
 And in their burning ears

Sound throbs like flame, and in their eyes
 new light
 Kindles the trembling night ;
 From faint illumined fields and starry valleys
 Wherefrom the hill-wind sallies,
 From Valombrosa, from Valdarno raise
 One Tuscan tune of praise.
 O lordly city of the field of death,
 Praise him with equal breath,
 From sleeping streets and gardens, and the
 stream
 That threads them as a dream
 Threads without light the untravelled ways
 of sleep
 With eyes that smile or weep ;
 From the sweet sombre beauty of wave and
 wall
 That fades and does not fall ;
 From colored domes and cloisters fair
 with fame,
 Praise thou and thine his name.
 Thou too, O little laurelled town of towers,
 Clothed with the flame of flowers,
 From windy ramparts girdled with young
 gold,
 From thy sweet hill-side fold
 Of wallflowers and the acacia's belted
 bloom
 And every blowing plume,
 Halls that saw Dante speaking, chapels
 fair
 As the outer hills and air,
 Praise him who feeds the fire that Dante
 fed,
 Our highest heroic head,
 Whose eyes behold through floated cloud
 and flame
 The maiden face of fame
 Like April's in Valdelsa ; fair as flowers,
 And patient as the hours ;
 Sad with slow sense of time, and bright
 with faith
 That levels life and death ;
 The final fame, that with a foot sublime
 Treads down reluctant time ;
 The fame that waits and watches and is
 wise,
 A virgin with chaste eyes,
 A goddess who takes hands with great
 men's grief ;
 Praise her, and him, our chief.
 Praise him, O Siena, and thou her deep
 green spring,
 O Fonte Branda, sing :

Shout from the red clefts of thy fiery crags,
 Shake out thy flying flags
 In the long wind that streams from hill to
 hill ;
 Bid thy full music fill
 The desolate red waste of sunset air
 And fields the old time saw fair,
 But now the hours ring void through
 ruined lands,
 Wild work of mortal hands ;
 Yet through thy dead Maremma let his
 name
 Take flight and pass in flame,
 And the red ruin of disastrous hours
 Shall quicken into flowers.
 Praise him, O fiery child of sun and sea,
 Naples, who bade thee be ;
 For till he sent the swords that scourge
 and save,
 Thou was not, but thy grave.
 But more than all these praise him and
 give thanks,
 Thou, from thy Tiber's banks,
 From all thine hills and from thy supreme
 dome,
 Praise him, O risen Rome.
 Let all thy children cities at thy knee
 Lift up their voice with thee,
 Saying 'for thy love's sake and our per-
 ished grief
 We laud thee, O our chief ;'
 Saying 'for thine hand and help when
 hope was dead
 We thank thee, O our head ;'
 Saying 'for thy voice and face within our
 sight
 We bless thee, O our light ;
 For waters cleansing us from days defiled
 We praise thee, O our child.'

So with an hundred cities' mouths in one
 Praising thy supreme son,
 Son of thy sorrow, O mother, O maid and
 mother,
 Our queen, who serve none other,
 Our lady of pity and mercy, and full of grace,
 Turn otherwhere thy face,
 Turn for a little and look what things are
 these
 Now fallen before thy knees ;
 Turn upon them thine eyes who hated
 thee,
 Behold what things they be,
 Italia: these are stubble that were steel,
 Dust, or a turning wheel ;

As leaves, as snow, as sand, that were so
 strong ;
 And howl, for all their song,
 And wail, for all their wisdom ; they that
 were
 So great, they are all stript bare,
 They are made empty of beauty, and all
 abhorred ;
 They are shivered, and their sword ;
 They are slain who slew, they are heart-
 less who were wise ;
 Yea, turn on these thine eyes,
 O thou, soliciting with soul sublime
 The obscure soul of time,
 Thou, with the wounds thy holy body
 bears
 From broken swords of theirs,
 Thou, with the sweet swoln eyelids that
 have bled
 Tears for thy thousands dead,
 And upon these, whose swords drank up
 like dew
 The sons of thine they slew,
 These, whose each gun blasted with mur-
 dering mouth
 Live flowers of thy fair south,
 These, whose least evil told in alien ears
 Turned men's whole blood to tears,
 These, whose least sin remembered for
 pure shame
 Turned all those tears to flame,
 Even upon these, when breaks the extreme
 blow
 And all the world cries woe,
 When heaven reluctant rains long-suffering
 fire
 On these and their desire,
 When his wind shakes them and his waters
 whelm
 Who rent thy robe and realm,
 When they that poured thy dear blood
 forth as wine
 Pour forth their own for thine,
 On these, on these have mercy : not in
 hate,
 But full of sacred fate,
 Strong from the shrine and splendid from
 the god,
 Smite, with no second rod.
 Because they spared not, do thou rather
 spare :
 Be not one thing they were.
 Let not one tongue of theirs who hate thee
 say
 That thou wast even as they.

Because their hands were bloody, be thine
white ;

Show light where they shed night :

Because they are foul, be thou the rather
pure ;

Because they are feeble, endure ;

Because they had no pity, have thou pity.

And thou, O supreme city,
O priestless Rome that shalt be, take in trust
Their names, their deeds, their dust,
Who held life less than thou wert ; be the
least

To thee indeed a priest,
Priest and burnt-offering and blood-sacri-
fice

Given without prayer or price,
A holier immolation than men wist,
A costlier eucharist,
A sacrament more saving ; bend thine head
Above these many dead

Once, and salute with thine eternal eyes
Their lowest head that lies.

Speak from thy lips of immemorial speech
If but one word for each.

Kiss but one kiss on each thy dead son's
mouth

Fallen dumb or north or south.
And laying but once thine hand on brow
and breast,

Bless them, through whom thou art
blest.

And saying in ears of these thy dead ' Well
done,'

Shall they not hear ' O son ' ?

And bowing thy face to theirs made pale
for thee,

Shall the shut eyes not see ?

Yea, through the hollow-hearted world of
death,
As light, as blood, as breath,
Shall there not flash and flow the fiery
sense,

The pulse of prescience ?

Shall not these know as in times overpast
Thee loftiest to the last ?

For times and wars shall change, kingdoms
and creeds,

And dreams of men, and deeds ;

Earth shall grow grey with all her golden
things,

Pale peoples and hoar kings ;
But though her thrones and towers of
nations fall,

Death has no part in all ;

In the air, nor in the imperishable sea,
Nor heaven, nor truth, nor thee.

Yea, let all sceptre-stricken nations lie,
But live thou though they die ;

Let their flags fade as flowers that storm
can mar,

But thine be like a star ;
Let England's, if it float not for men free,
Fall, and forget the sea ;

Let France's, if it shadow a hateful head,
Drop as a leaf drops dead ;

Thine let what storm soever smite the rest
Smite as it seems him best ;

Thine let the wind that can, by sea or
land,

Wrest from thy banner-hand.

Die they in whom dies freedom, die and
cease,

Though the world weep for these ;
Live thou and love and lift when these lie
dead

The green and white and red.

O our Republic that shalt bind in bands
The kingdomless far lands

And link the chainless ages ; thou that
wast

With England ere she past
Among the faded nations, and shalt be
Again, when sea to sea

Calls through the wind and light of morn-
ing time,

And throneless clime to clime
Makes antiphonal answer ; thou that art

Where one man's perfect heart
Burns, one man's brow is brightened for
thy sake,

Thine, strong to make or break ;

O fair Republic hallowing with stretched
hands

The limitless free lands,
When all men's heads for love, not fear,
bow down

To thy sole royal crown,
As thou to freedom ; when man's life
smells sweet ;

And at thy bright swift feet
A bloodless and a bondless world is laid ;

Then, when thy men are made,
Let these indeed as we in dreams behold

One chosen of all thy fold,
One of all fair things fairest, one exalt

Above all fear or fault,
One forgetful of unhappier men

And us who loved her then ;

With eyes that outlook suns and dream on
 graves ;
 With voice like quiring waves ;
 With heart the holier for their memories'
 sake
 Who slept that she might wake ;
 With breast the sweeter for that sweet
 blood lost,
 And all the milkless cost ;
 Lady of earth, whose large equality
 Bends but to her and thee ;
 Equal with heaven, and infinite of years,

And splendid from quenched tears ;
 Strong with old strength of great things
 fallen and fled,
 Diviner for her dead ;
 Chaste of all stains and perfect from all
 scars,
 Above all storms and stars,
 All winds that blow through time, all
 waves that foam,
 Our Capitolian Rome.
 1867.

ODE ON PROCLAMATION OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

SEPTEMBER 4TH, 1870.

À VICTOR HUGO.

αἴλινον αἴλινον εἰπέ, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω

STROPHE I.

With songs and crying and sound of ac-
 clamations,
 Lo, the flame risen, the fire that falls in
 showers !
 Hark ; for the word is out among the na-
 tions :
 Look ; for the light is up upon the hours ;
 O fears, O shames, O many tribulations,
 Yours were all yesterdays, but this day
 ours.
 Strong were your bonds linked fast with
 lamentations,
 With groans and tears built into walls
 and towers :
 Strong were your works and wonders of
 high stations,
 Your forts blood-based, and rampires of
 your powers :
 Lo now the last of divers desolations,
 The hand of time, that gathers hosts like
 flowers ;
 Time, that fills up and pours out generations ;
 Time, at whose breath confounded empire-
 cowers.

STR. 2.

What are these moving in 'the dawn's
 red gloom ?
 What is she waited on by dread and
 doom,
 Ill ministers of morning, bondsmen born of
 night ?
 If that head veiled and bowed be morn-
 ing's head,
 If she come walking between doom and
 dread,
 Who shall rise up with song and dance
 before her sight ?
 Are not the night's dead heaped about
 her feet ?
 Is not death swollen, and slaughter full
 of meat ?
 What, is their feast a bride-feast, where
 men sing and dance ?
 A bitter, a bitter bride-song and a shrill
 Should the house raise that such bride-
 followers fill,
 Wherein defeat weds ruin, and takes for
 bride-bed France.

For nineteen years deep shame and sore
 desire
 Fed from men's hearts with hungering
 fangs of fire,
 And hope fell sick with famine for the food
 of change.
 Now is change come, but bringing funeral
 urns ;
 Now is day nigh, but the dawn blinds
 and burns ;
 Now time long dumb hath language, but
 the tongue is strange.

We that have seen her not our whole
 lives long,
 We to whose ears her dirge was cradle-
 song,
 The dirge men sang who laid in earth her
 living head,
 Is it by such light that we live to see
 Rise, with rent hair and raiment, Liberty?
 Does her grave open only to restore her
 dead ?

Ah, was it this we looked for, looked
 and prayed,
 This hour that treads upon the prayers
 we made,
 This raveing hour that breaks down good
 and ill alike ?
 Ah, was it thus we thought to see her
 and hear,
 The one love indivisible and dear ?
 Is it her head that hands which strike down
 wrong must strike ?

STR. 3.

Where is hope, and promise where, in all
 these things,
 Shocks of strength with strength, and jar
 of hurtling kings ?
 Who of all men, who will show us any
 good ?
 Shall these lightnings of blind battles give
 men light ?
 Where is freedom ? who will bring us in
 her sight,
 That have hardly seen her footprint where
 she stood ?

STR. 4.

Who is this that rises red with wounds and
 splendid,
 All her breast and brow made beautiful
 with scars,

T

Burning bare as naked daylight, undefended,
 In her hands for spoils her splintered
 prison-bars,
 In her eyes the light and fire of long pain
 ended,
 In her lips a song as of the morning
 stars ?

STR. 5.

O torn out of thy trance,
 O deathless, O my France,
 O many-wounded mother, O redeemed to
 reign !
 O rarely sweet and bitter
 The bright brief tears that glitter
 On thine unclosing eyelids, proud of their
 own pain ;
 The beautiful brief tears
 That wash the stains of years
 White as the names immortal of thy chosen
 and slain.
 O loved so much so long,
 O smitten with such wrong,
 O purged at last and perfect without spot
 or stain,
 Light of the light of man,
 Reborn republican,
 At last, O first Republic, hailed in heaven
 again !
 Out of the obscene eclipse
 Re-risen, with burning lips
 To witness for us if we looked for thee in
 vain.

STR. 6.

Thou wast the light whereby men saw
 Light, thou the trumpet of the law
 Proclaiming manhood to mankind ;
 And what if all these years were blind
 And shameful ? hath the sun a flaw
 Because one hour hath power to draw
 Mist round him wreathed as links to
 bind ?
 And what if now keen anguish drains
 The very wellspring of thy veins
 And very spirit of thy breath ?
 The life outlives them and disdains ;
 The sense which makes the soul remains,
 And blood of thought which travaileth
 To bring forth hope with procreant pains.
 O thou that satest bound in chains
 Between thine hills and pleasant plains
 As whom his own soul vanquisheth,
 Held in the bonds of his own thought,
 Whence very death can take off nought,

Nor sleep, with bitterer dreams than
death,—

What though thy thousands at thy knees
Lie thick as grave-worms feed on these,
Though thy green fields and joyous places
Are populous with blood-blackening faces
And wan limbs eaten by the sun ?

Better an end of all men's races,
Better the world's whole work were
done,

And life wiped out of all our traces,
And there were left to time not one,
Than such as these that fill thy graves
Should sow in slaves the seed of slaves.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Not of thy sons, O mother many-wounded,
Not of thy sons are slaves ingrafted and
grown.

Was it not thine, the fire whence light re-
bounded

From kingdom on rekindling kingdom
thrown,

From hearts confirmed on tyrannies con-
founded,

From earth on heaven, fire mightier than
his own ?

Not thine the breath wherewith time's
clarion sounded,

And all the terror in the trumpet blown ?
The voice whereat the thunders stood
astounded

As at a new sound of a God unknown ?
And all the seas and shores within them
bounded

Shook at the strange speech of thy lips
alone,

And all the hills of heaven, the storm-
surrounded,

Trembled, and all the night sent forth a
groan.

ANT. 2.

What hast thou done that such an hour
should be

More than another clothed with blood to
thee ?

Thou hast seen many a bloodred hour be-
fore this one.

What art thou that thy lovers should
misdoubt ?

What is this hour that it should cast hope
out ?

If hope turn back and fall from thee, what
hast thou done ?

Thou hast done ill against thine own
soul ; yea,

Thine own soul hast thou slain and
burnt away,

Dissolving it with poison into foul thinfume.

Thine own life and creation of thy fate

Thou hast set thy hand to unmake and
discreate ;

And now thy slain soul rises between ^{the} dead
and doom.

Yea, this is she that comes between
them led ;

That veiled head is thine own soul's
buried head,

The head that was as morning's in the
whole world's sight.

These wounds are deadly on thee, but
deadlier

Those wounds the ravenous pigeon left
on her ;

How shall her weak hands hold thy weak
hand up to fight ?

Ah, but her fiery eyes, her eyes are these
That gazing, make thee shiver to the
knees

And the blood leap within thee, and the
strong joy rise.

What, doth her sight yet make thine
heart to dance ?

O France, O freedom, O the soul of
France,

Are ye then quickened, gazing in each
other's eyes ?

Ah, and her words, the words where-
with she sought thee

Sorrowing, and bare in hand the robe
she wrought thee

To wear when soul and body were again
made one,

And fairest among women, and a bride.
Sweet-voiced to sing the bridegroom to
her side,

The spirit of man, the bridegroom brighter
than the sun !

ANT. 3.

Who shall help me ? who shall take me by
the hand ?

Who shall teach mine eyes to see, my feet
to stand,

Now my foes have stripped and wound-
ed me by night ?

Who shall heal me? who shall come to
take my part?

Who shall set me as a seal upon his heart,
As a seal upon his arm made bare for
fight?

ANT. 4.

If thou know not, O thou fairest among
women,

If thou see not where the signs of him
abide,

Lift thine eyes up to the light that stars
grow dim in,

To the morning whence he comes to
take thy side.

None but he can bear the light that love
wraps him in,

When he comes on earth to take himself
a bride.

ANT. 5.

Light of light, name of names,
Whose shadows are live flames,

The soul that moves the wings of worlds
upon their way :

Life, spirit, blood and breath

In time and change and death

Substant through strength and weakness,
ardor and decay ;

Lord of the lives of lands,

Spirit of man, whose hands

Weave the web through wherein man's
centuries fall as prey ;

That art within our will

Power to make, save, and kill,

Knowledge and choice, to take extremities
and weigh ;

In the soul's hand to smite

Strength, in the soul's eye sight ;

That to the soul art even as is the soul to
clay ;

Now to this people be

Love ; come, to set them free,

With feet that tread the night, with eyes
that sound the day.

ANT. 6.

Thou that wast on their fathers dead

As effluent God effused and shed,

Heaven to be handled, hope made flesh,

Break for them now time's iron mesh ;

Give them thyself for hand and head,

Thy breath for life, thy love for bread,

Thy thought for spirit to refresh,

Thy bitterness to pierce and sting,

Thy sweetness for a healing spring,

Be to them knowledge, strength, life,
light,

Thou to whose feet the centuries cling

And in the wide warmth of thy wing

Seek room and rest as birds by night,

O thou the kingless people's king,

To whom the lips of silence sing,

Called by thy name of thanksgiving

Freedom, and by thy name of might

Justice, and by thy secret name

Love ; the same need is on the same

Men, be the same God in their sight !

From this their hour of bloody tears

Their praise goes up into thine ears,

Their bruised lips clothe thy name with
praises,

The song of thee their crushed voice
raises,

Their grief seeks joy for psalms to bor-
row,

With tired feet seeks her through time's
mazes

Where each day's blood leaves pale the
morrow,

And from their eyes in thine there gazes

A spirit other far than sorrow—

A soul triumphal, white and whole

And single, that salutes thy soul.

EPODE.

All the lights of the sweet heaven that sing
together ;

All the years of the green earth that bare
man free ;

Rays and lightings of the fierce or tender
weather,

Heights and lowlands, wastes and head-
lands of the sea,

Dawns and sunset, hours that hold the
world in tether,

Be our witnesses and seals of things to be.

Lo the mother, the Republic universal,

Hands that hold time fast, hands feeding
men with might,

Lips that sing the song of the earth, that
make rehearsal

Of all seasons, and the sway of day with
night,

Eyes that see as from a mountain the dis-
persal,

The huge ruin of things evil, and the
flight ;

Large exulting limbs, and bosom godlike
 moulded
 Where the man-child hangs, and womb
 wherein he lay ;
 Very life that could it die would leave the
 soul dead,
 Face whereat all fears and forces flee
 away,
 Breath that moves the world as winds a
 flower-bell folded,
 Feet that trampling the gross darkness
 beat out day.
 In the hour of pain and pity,
 Sore spent, a wounded city,
 Her foster-child seeks to her, stately where
 she stands ;
 In the utter hour of woes,
 Wind-shaken, blind with blows,
 Paris lays hold upon her, grasps her with
 child's hands ;
 Face kindles face with fire,
 Hearts take and give desire,
 Strange joy breaks red as tempest on tor-
 mented lands.
 Day to day, man to man,
 Plights love republican,
 And faith and memory burn with passion
 toward each other ;
 Hope, with fresh heavens to track,
 Looks for a breath's space back,
 Where the divine past years reach hands
 to this their brother ;
 And souls of men whose death
 Was light to her and breath
 Send word of love yet living to the living
 mother.
 They call her, and she hears ;
 O France, thy marvellous years,
 The years of the strong travail, the
 triumphant time,
 Days terrible with love,
 Red-shod with flames thereof,
 Call to this hour that breaks in pieces
 crown and crime ;
 The hour with feet to spurn,
 Hands to crush, fires to burn
 The state whereto no latter foot of man
 shall climb.
 Yea, come what grief now may
 By ruinous night or day,
 One grief there cannot, one the first and
 last grief, shame.
 Come force to break thee and bow
 Down, shame can come not now,

Nor, though hands wound thee, tongues
 make mockery of thy name :
 Come swords and scar thy brow,
 No brand there burns it now,
 No spot but of thy blood marks thy white-
 fronted fame.
 Now though the mad blind morrow
 With shafts of iron sorrow
 Should split thine heart, and whelm thine
 head with sanguine waves ;
 Though all that draw thy breath
 Bled from all veins to death,
 And thy dead body were the grave of all
 their graves,
 And thine unchilded womb
 For all their tombs a tomb,
 At least within thee as on thee room were
 none for slaves.
 This power thou hast, to be,
 Come death or come not, free ;
 That in all tongues of time's this praise be
 chanted of thee,
 That in thy wild worst hour
 This power put in thee power,
 And moved as hope around and hung as
 heaven above thee,
 And while earth sat in sadness
 In only thee put gladness,
 Put strength and love, to make all hearts
 of ages love thee.
 That in death's face thy chant
 Arose up jubilant,
 And thy great heart with thy great peril
 grew more great :
 And sweet for bitter tears
 Put out the fires of fears,
 And love made lovely for thee loveless hell
 and hate ;
 And they that house with error,
 Cold shame and burning terror,
 Fled from truth risen and thee made migh-
 tier than thy fate.
 This shall all years remember ;
 For this thing shall September
 Have only name of honour, only sign of
 white.
 And this year's fearful name,
 France, in thine house of fame
 Above all names of all thy triumphs shalt
 thou write,
 When, seeing thy freedom stand
 Even at despair's right hand,
 The cry thou gavest at heart was only of
 delight.

DIRÆ

Guai a voi, anime prave.

DANTE.

Soyez maudits, d'abord d'être ce que vous êtes,

Et puis soyez maudits d'obséder les poètes !

VICTOR HUGO.

I.—A DEAD KING.

[*Ferdinand II. entered Malebolge May 22nd, 1859.*]

Go down to hell. This end is good to see ;
The breath is lightened and the sense at ease

Because thou art not ; sense nor breath there is

In what thy body was, whose soul shall be
Chief nerve of hell's pained heart eternally.

Thou art abolished from the midst of these

That art what thou wast : Pius from his knees

Blows off the dust that flecked them, bowed for thee.

Yea, now the long-tongued slack-lipped
litanies

Fail, and the priest has no more prayer to sell—

Now the last Jesuit found about thee is
The beast that made thy fouler flesh his cell—

Time lays his finger on thee, saying, 'Cease ;
Here is no room for thee ; go down to hell.'

II.—A YEAR AFTER.

If blood throbs yet in this that was thy face,

O thou whose soul was full of devil's faith,

If in thy flesh the worm's bite slackeneth
In some acute red pause of iron days,

Arise now, gird thee, get thee on thy ways,
Breathe off the worm that crawls and fears not breath ;

King, it may be thou shalt prevail on death ;

King, it may be thy soul shall find out grace.

O spirit that hast eased the place of Cain,
Weep now and howl, yea weep now sore ;
for this

That was thy kingdom hath spat out its king.

Wilt thou plead now with God ? behold again,

Thy prayer for thy son's sake is turned to a hiss,

Thy mouth to a snake's whose slime outlives the sting,

III.—PETER'S PENCE FROM PERUGIA.

ISCARIOT, thou grey-grown, beast of blood.
Stand forth to plead ; stand, while red drops run here

And there down fingers shaken with foul fear,

Down the sick shivering chin that stooped and sued,

Bowed to the bosom, for a little food
At Herod's hand, who smites thee cheek and ear.

Cry out, Iscariot ; haply he will hear ;
Cry, till he turn again to do thee good.

Gather thy gold up, Judas, all thy gold,
And buy thee death ; no Christ is here to sell,

But the dead earth of poor men bought and sold,

While year heaps year above thee safe in hell,

To grime thy grey dishonourable head
With dusty shame, when thou art damned and dead.

IV.—PAPAL ALLOCUTION.

'Popule mi, quid tibi feci?'

What hast thou done? Hark, till thine ears wax hot,
Judas; for these and these things hast thou done.

Thou hast made earth faint, and sickened the sweet sun,

With fume of blood that reeks from limbs that rot;

Thou hast washed thine hands and mouth, saying, 'Am I not

Clean?' and thy lips were bloody, and there was none

To speak for man against thee, no, not one;

This hast thou done to us, Iscariot.

Therefore thou be deaf and heaven be dumb,
A cry shall be from under to proclaim

In the ears of all who shed men's blood or sell

Pius the Ninth, Judas the Second, come

Where Boniface out of the filth and flame
Barks for his advent in the clefts of hell.*

V.—THE BURDEN OF AUSTRIA.

1866.

O DAUGHTER of pride, wasted with misery,
With all the glory that thy shame put on
Stripped off thy shame, O daughter of
Babylon,

Yea, whoso be it, yea, happy shall he be
That as thou hast served us hath rewarded thee.

Blessed, who throweth against war's boundary stone

Thy warrior brood, and breaketh bone by bone

Misrule thy son, thy daughter Tyranny.
That landmark shalt thou not remove for shame,

But sitting down there in a widow's weed
Wail; for what fruit is now of thy red fame?
Have thy sons too and daughters learnt indeed

What thing it is to weep, what thing to bleed?

Is it not thou that now art but a name?†

*Dante, 'Inferno,' xix. 53.

† 'A geographical expression.'—Metternich of Italy.

VI.—LOCUSTA.

COME close and see her and hearken. This is she.

Stop the ways fast against the stench that nips

Your nostril as it nears her. Lo, the lips
That between prayer and prayer find time to be

Poisonous, the hands holding a cup and key,

Key of deep hell, cup whence blood reeks and drips;

The loose lewd limbs, the reeling hingeless hips,

The scurf that is not skin but leprosy.

This haggard harlot grey of face and green
With the old hand's cunning mixes her new priest

The cup she mixed her Nero, stirred and spiced.

She lips of Mary and Jesus Nazarene

With a tongue tuned, and head that bends to the east,

Praying. There are who say she is bride of Christ.

VII.—CELÆNO.

THE blind king hides his weeping eyeless head,

Sick with the helpless hate and shame and awe,

Till food have choked the glutton hell-bird's craw

And the foul cropful creature lie as dead

And soil itself with sleep and too much bread;

So the man's life serves under the beast's law,

And things whose spirit lives in mouth and maw

Share shrieking the soul's board and soil her bed,

Till man's blind spirit, their sick slave resign

Its kingdom to the priests whose souls are swine,

And the scourged serf lie reddening from their rod,

Discrowned, disrobed, dismantled, with lost eyes

Seeking where lurks in what conjectual skies

That triple-headed hound of hell their God.

VIII.—A CHOICE.

FAITH is the spirit that makes man's body
and blood
Sacred, to crown when life and death
have ceased
His heavenward head for high fame's
holy feast ;
But as one swordstroke swift as wizard's rod
Made Cæsar carrion and made Brutus God,
Faith false or true, born patriot or born
priest,
Smites into semblance or of man or beast
The soul that feeds on clean or unclean food.
Lo here the faith that lives on its own light,
Visible music ; and lo there, the foul
Shape without shape, the happy throat
and howl.
Sword of the spirit of man ! arise and
smite,
And sheer through throat and claw and
maw and tongue
Kill the beast faith that lives on its own
dung.

IX.—THE AUGURS.

LAY the corpse out on the altar ; bid the
elect
Slaves clear the ways of service spiritual,
Sweep clean the stalled soul's serviceable
stall,
Ere the chief priest's dismantling hands
detect
The ulcerous flesh of faith all scaled and
specked
Beneath the bandages that hid it all,
And with sharp edgetools oecumenical
The leprous carcases of creeds dissect.
As on the night ere Brutus grew divine
The sick-souled augurs found their ox or
swine
Heartless ; so now too by their after art
In the same Rome, at an uncleaner shrine,
Limb from rank limb, and putrid part
from part,
They carve the corpse—a beast without
a heart.

X.—A COUNSEL.

O STRONG Republic of the nobler years
Whose white feet shine beside time's
fairer flood
That shall flow on the clearer for our
blood

Now shed, and the less brackish for our
tears ;
When time and truth have put out hopes
and fears
With certitude, and love has burst the
bud,
If these whose powers then down the
wind shall scud
Still live to feel thee smite their eyes and
cars,
When thy foot's tread hath crushed their
crowns and creeds.
Care thou not then to crush the beast that
bleeds,
The snake whose belly cleaveth to the
sod,
Nor set thine heel on men as on their
deeds ;
But let the worm Napoleon crawl untrod,
Nor grant Mastai the gallows of his God.
1869.

XI.—THE MODERATES.

Virtutem videant intabescantque relictâ.

SHE stood before her traitors bound and
bare,
Clothed with her wounds and with her
naked shame
As with a weed of fiery tears and flame,
Their mother-land, their common weal and
care,
And they turned from her and denied, and
sware
They did not know this woman nor her
name.
And they took truce with tyrants and
grew tame,
And gathered up cast crowns and creeds to
wear,
And rags and shards regilded. Then she
took
In her bruised hands their broken pledge,
and eyed
These men so late so loud upon her side
With one inevitable and tearless look,
That they might see her face whom they
forsook ;
And they beheld what they had left, and
died.

February, 1870,

XII.—INTERCESSION.

Ave Cæsar Imperator, morituum te saluto.

I.

O DEATH, a little more, and then the worm ;
 A little longer, O Death, a little yet,
 Before the grave gape and the grave-worm fret ;
 Before the sanguine-spotted hand infirm
 Be rottenness, and that foul brain, the germ
 Of all ill things and thoughts, be stopped and set ;
 A little while, O Death, ere he forget,
 A small space more of life, a little term ;
 A little longer ere he and thou be met,
 Ere in that hand that fed thee to thy mind
 The poison-cup of life be overset ;
 A little respite of disastrous breath,
 Till the soul lift up her lost eyes, and find
 Nor God nor help nor hope, but thee O Death.

II.

Shall a man die before his dying day,
 Death ? and for him though the utter day be nigh,
 Not yet, not yet we give him leave to die ;
 We give him grace not yet that men should say
 He is dead, wiped out, perished and past away.
 Till the last bitterness of life go by,
 Thou shalt not slay him ; till those last dregs run dry,
 O thou last lord of life ! thou shalt not slay.
 Let the lips live a little while and lie,
 The hand a little, and falter, and fail of strength,
 And the soul shudder and sicken at the sky ;
 Yea, let him live, though God nor man would let
 Save for the curse's sake ; then at bitter length,
 Lord, will we yield him to thee, but not yet.

III.

Hath he not deeds to do and days to see
 Yet ere the day that is to see him dead ?
 Beats there no brain yet in the poisonous head.

Throbs there no treason ? if no such thing there be,
 If no such thought, surely this is not he.
 Look to the hands then ; are the hands not red ?
 What are the shadows about this man's bed ?
 Death, was not this the cupbearer to thee ?
 Nay, let him live then, till in this life's stead
 Even he shall pray for that thou hast to give ;
 Till seeing his hopes and not his memories fled
 Even he shall cry upon thee a bitter cry,
 That life is worse than death ; then let him live,
 Till death seem worse than life ; then let him die.

IV.

O watcher at the guardless gate of kings,
 O doorkeeper that serving at their feast
 Hast in thine hand their doomsday drink and seest
 With eyeless sight the soul of unseen things ;
 Thou in whose ear the dumb time coming sings,
 Death, priest and king that makest of king and priest
 A name, a dream, a less thing than the least,
 Hover awhile above him with closed wings,
 Till the coiled soul, an evil snake-shaped beast,
 Eat its base bodily lair of flesh away ;
 If haply, or ever its cursed life have ceased,
 Or ever thy cold hands cover his head
 From sight of France and freedom and broad day,
 He may see these and wither and be dead.
 PARIS, *September, 1869.*

XII.—THE SAVIOUR OF SOCIETY.

I.

O SON of man, but of what man who knows ?
 That broughtest healing on thy leathern wings
 To priests, and under them didst gather kings,

And madest friends to thee of all man's
foe's ;

Before thine incarnation, the tale goes,
Thy virgin mother, pure of sensual
stings.

Communed by night with angels of
chaste things,

And, full of grace, untimely felt the throes
Of motherhood upon her, and believed

The obscure annunciation made when
late

A raven-feathered raven-throated dove
Croaked salutation to the mother of
love

Whose misconception was immaculate,
And when her time was come she miscon-
ceived.

II.

Thine incarnation was upon this wise,
Saviour ; and out of east and west were
led

To thy foul cradle by thy planet red
Shepherds of souls that feed their sheep
with lies

Till the utter soul die as the body dies,
And the wise men that ask but to be fed
Though the hot shambles be their board
and bed

And sleep on any dunghill shut their eyes,
So they lie warm and fatten in the mire ;

And the high priest enthroned yet in thy
name,

Judas, baptised thee with men's blood for
hire ;

And now thou hangest nailed to thine
own shame

In sight of all time, but while heaven
has flame

Shalt find no resurrection from hell-fire.

December, 1869.

XIV.—MENTANA : SECOND ANNI-
VERSARY.

Est-ce qu'il n'est pas temps que la foudre se prouve,
Cieux profonds, en broyant ce chien, fils de la louve ?
La Légende des Siècles :—Rathbert

I.

By the dead body of Hope, the spotless lamb
Thou threwest into the high priest's
slaughtering-room,
And by the child Despair born red
therefrom

As, thank the secret sire picked out to cram
With spurious spawn thy misconceiving
dam,

Thou, like a worm from a town's com-
mon tomb,

Didst creep from forth the kennel of her
womb,

Born to break down with catapult and ram
Man's builded towers of promise, and with
breath

And tongue to track and hunt his hopes to
death ;

O, by that sweet dead body abused and
slain

And by that child mismothered—dog, by all
Thy curses thou hast cursed mankind
withal,

With what curse shall man curse thee
back again ?

II.

By the brute soul that made man's soul its
food ;

By time grown poisonous with it ; by the
hate

And horror of all souls not miscreate ;
By the hour of power that evil hath on
good ;

And by the incognizable fatherhood
Which made a whorish womb the shame-
ful gate

That opening let out loose to fawn on
fate

A hound half-blooded ravening for man's
blood ;

(What prayer but this for these should any
say,

Thou dog of hell, but this that Shakespeare
said ?)

By night deflowered and desecrated day,
That fall as one curse on one cursed head,

'Cancel his bond of life, dear God, I pray,
That I may live to say, the dog is dead !'

1869.

XV.—MENTANA : THIRD ANNI-
VERSARY.

I.

SUCH prayers last year were put up for thy
sake ;

What shall this year do that hath lived to
see

The piteous and unpitied end of thee ?

What moan, what cry, what clamour shall
it make,
Seeing as a reed breaks all thine empire
break,
And all thy great strength as a rotten
tree,
Whose branches made broad night from
sea to sea,
And the world shuddered when a leaf would
shake?
From the unknown deep wherein those
prayers were heard,
From the dark height of time there sounds
a word,
Crying, Comfort; though death ride on
this red hour,
Hope waits with eyes that make the
morning dim,
Till liberty, re clothed with love and power,
Shall pass and know not if she tread on
him.

II.

The hour for which men hungered and had
thirst,
And dying were loth to die before it
came,
Is it indeed upon thee? and the lame
Late foot of vengeance on thy trace accurst
For years insepulchred and crimes in-
hearsed,
For days marked red or black with blood
or shame,
Hath it outrun thee to tread out thy
name?
This scourge, this hour, in this indeed the
worst?
O clothed and crowned with curses, canst
thou tell?
Have thy dead whispered to thee what
they see
Whose eyes are open in the dark on thee
Ere spotted soul and body take farewell
Or what of life beyond the worm's may
be
Sate the immitigable hours in hell?
1870.

XVI.—THE DESCENT INTO HELL.

January 9th, 1873.

O NIGHT and death, to whom we grudged
him then,

When in man's sight he stood not yet un-
done,
Your king, your priest, your saviour, and
your son,
We grudge not now, who know that not
again
Shall this curse come upon the sins of
men,
Nor this face look upon the living sun
That shall behold not so abhorred an
one
In all the days whereof his eye takes ken.
The bond is cancelled, and the prayer is
heard
That seemed so long but weak and wasted
breath;
Take him, for he is yours, O night and
death
Hell yawns on him whose life was as a
word
Uttered by death in hate of heaven and
light,
A curse now dumb upon the lips of night.

II.

What shapes are these and shadows with-
out end
That fill the night full as the storm of
rain
With myriads of dead men and women
slain,
Old with young, child with mother, friend
with friend,
That on the deep mid wintering air impend,
Pale yet with mortal wrath and human
pain,
Who died that this man dead now too
might reign,
Toward whom their hands point and their
faces bend?
The ruining flood would redden earth and
air
If for each soul whose guiltless blood was
shed
There fell but one drop on this one man's
head
Whose soul to-night stands bodiless and
bare,
For whom our hearts give thanks who put
up prayer,
That we have lived to say, the dog is
dead.

XVI.—APOLOGIA.

IF wrath embitter the sweet mouth of song,
And make the sunlight fire before those
eyes

That would drink draughts of peace from
the unsoiled skies,

The wrongdoing is not ours, but ours the
wrong,

Who hear too loud on earth and see too long
The grief that dies not with the groan
that dies,

Till the strong bitterness of pity cries
Within us, that our anger should be strong.
For chill is known by heat and heat by
chill,

And the desire that hope makes love to
still

By the fear flying beside it or above,
A falcon fledged to follow a fledgeling
dove,

And by the fume and flame of hate of ill
The exuberant light and burning bloom
of love.

SONGS BEFORE SUNRISE.

DEDICATION.

TO

JOSEPH MAZZINI.

TAKE, since you bade it should bear,
 These, of the seed of your sowing,
 Blossom or berry or weed.
 Sweet though they be not, or fair,
 That the dew of your word kept grow-
 ing,
 Sweet at least was the seed.

Men bring you love-offerings of tears,
 And sorrow the kiss that assuages.
 And slaves the hate-offering of wrongs,
 And time the thanksgiving of years,
 And years the thanksgiving of ages ;
 I bring you my handful of songs.

If a perfume be left, if a bloom,
 Let it live till Italia be risen,
 To be strewn in the dust of her car
 When her voice shall awake from the tomb
 England, and France from her prison,
 Sisters, a star by a star.

I bring you the sword of a song,
 The sword of my spirit's desire,
 Feeble ; but laid at your feet,

That which was weak shall be strong,
 That which was cold shall take fire,
 That which was bitter be sweet.

It was wrought not with hands to smite
 Nor hewn after swordsmiths' fashion,
 Nor tempered on anvil of steel ;
 But with visions and dreams of the night
 But with hope and the patience of passion,
 And the signet of love for a seal.

Be it witness, till one more strong,
 Till a loftier lyre, till a rarer
 Lute praise her better than I,
 Be it witness before you, my song,
 That I knew her, the world's banner
 bearer,
 Who shall cry the republican cry.

Yea, even she as at first,
 Yea, she alone and none other,
 Shall cast down, shall build up, shall
 bring home ;
 Slake earth's hunger and thirst,
 Lighten, and lead as a mother ;
 First name of the world's names, Rome.

PRELUDE.

BETWEEN the green bud and the red
 Youth sat and sang by Time, and shed
 From eyes and tresses flowers and tears,
 From heart and spirit hopes and fears,
 Upon the hollow stream whose bed
 Is channelled by the foamless years ;
 And with the white the gold-haired head
 Mixed running locks, and in Time's ears
 Youth's dreams hung singing, and Time's
 truth
 Was half not harsh in the ears of Youth.

Between the bud and the blown flower
 Youth talked with joy and grief an hour,
 With footless joy and wingless grief
 And twin-born faith and disbelief
 Who share the seasons to devour ;
 And long ere these made up their sheaf
 Felt the winds round him shake and shower
 The rose-red and the blood-red leaf,
 Delight whose germ grew never grain,
 And passion dyed in its own pain.

Then he stood up, and trod to dust
 Fear and desire, mistrust and trust,
 And dreams of bitter sleep and sweet,
 And bound for sandals on his feet
 Knowledge and patience of what must
 And what things may be, in the heat
 And cold of years that rot and rust
 And alter ; and his spirit's meat
 Was freedom, and his staff was wrought
 Of strength, and his cloak woven of thought.

For what has he whose will sees clear
 To do with doubt and faith and fear,
 Swift hopes and slow despondencies ?
 His heart is equal with the sea's
 And with the sea-wind's, and his ear
 Is level to the speech of these,
 And his soul communes and takes cheer
 With the actual earth's equalities,
 Air, light, and night, hills, winds, and
 streams,
 And seeks not strength from strengthless
 dreams.

His soul is even with the sun
 Whose spirit and whose eyes are one,

Who seeks not stars by day nor light
 And heavy heat of day by night.
 Him can no God cast down, whom none
 Can lift in hope beyond the height
 Of fate and nature and things done
 By the calm rule of might and right
 That bids men be and bear and do,
 And die beneath blind skies or blue.

To him the lights of even and morn
 Speak no vain things of love or scorn,
 Fancies and passions miscreate
 By man in things dispassionate.
 Nor holds he fellowship forlorn
 With souls that pray and hope and hate,
 And doubt they had better not been born,
 And fain would lure or scare off fate
 And charm their doomsman from their
 oom
 And make fear dig its own false tomb.

He builds not half of doubts and half
 Of dreams his own soul's cenotaph
 Whence hopes and fears with helpless
 eyes,
 Wrapt loose in cast-off cerecloths, rise
 And dance and wring their hands and laugh,
 And weep thin tears and sigh light sighs,
 And without living lips would quaff
 The living spring in man that lies,
 And drain his soul of faith and strength
 It might have lived on a life's length.

He hath given himself and hath not sold
 To God for heaven or man for gold,
 Or grief for comfort that it gives,
 Or joy for grief's restoratives.
 He hath given himself to time, whose fold
 Shuts in the mortal flock that lives
 On its plain pasture's heat and cold
 And the equal year's alternatives.
 Earth, heaven, and time, death, life, and he,
 Endure while they shall be to be.

"Yet between death and life are hours
 To flush with love and hide in flowers ;
 What profit save in these ?" men cry :
 "Ah, see, between soft earth and sky,

What only good things here are ours !"

They say, "what better wouldst thou try,
What sweeter sing of? or what powers

Serve, that will give thee ere thou die
More joy to sing and be less sad,
More heart to play and grow more glad?"

Play then and sing; we too have played,
We likewise, in that subtle shade.

We too have twisted through our hair
Such tendrils as the wild Loves wear,
And heard what mirth the Mænads made,
Till the wind blew our garlands bare
And left their roses disarrayed,

And smote the summer with strange air,
And disengirdled and discrowned
The limbs and locks that vine-wreaths
bound.

We too have tracked by star-proof trees
The tempest of the Thyiades

Scare the loud night on hills that hid
The blood-feasts of the Bassarid,
Heard their song's iron cadences

Fright the wolf hungering from the kid,
Outroar the lion-throated seas,

Outside the north-wind if it chid,
And hush the torrent-tongued ravines
With thunders of their tambourines.

But the fierce flute whose notes acclaim
Dim goddesses of fiery fame,

Cymbal and clamorous kettledrum,
Timbrels and tabrets, all are dumb
That turned the high chill air to flame;
The singing tongues of fire are numb

That called on Cotys by her name
Edonian, till they felt her come
And maddened, and her mystic face
Lightened along the streams of Thrace.

For Pleasure slumberless and pale,
And Passion with rejected veil,

Pass, and the tempest-footed throng
Of hours that flow them with song
Till their feet flag and voices fail,
And lips that were so loud so long
Learn silence, or a wearier wail;

So keen is change, and time so strong,
To weave the robes of life and rend
And weave again till life have end.

But weak is change, but strengthless time,
To take the light from heaven or climb

The hills of heaven with wasting feet.

Songs they can stop that earth found
meet,

But the stars keep their ageless rhyme;
Flowers they can slay that spring thought
sweet.

But the stars keep their spring sublime:
Passions and pleasures can defeat,
Actions and agonies control,
And life and death, but not the soul.

Because man's soul is man's God still,
What wind soever waft his will

Across the waves of day and night
To port or shipwreck, left or right,
By shores and shoals of good and ill;
And still its flame at mainmast height
Through the rent air that foam-flakes fall
Sustains the indomitable light
Whence only man hath strength to steer
Or helm to handle without fear.

Save his own soul's light overhead,
None leads him, and none ever led,

Across birth's hidden harbor bar,
Past youth where shoreward shallows are,
Through age that drives on toward the real
Vast void of sunset hailed from far,
To the equal waters of the dead;
Save his own soul he hath no star,
And sinks, except his own soul guide,
Helmless in middle turn of tide.

No blast of air or fire of sun

Puts out the light whereby we run
With girdled loins our lamplit race,
And each from each takes heart of grace
And spirit till his turn be done,
And light of face from each man's face
In whom the light of trust is one;
Since only souls that keep their place
By their own light, and watch things roll,
And stand, have light for any soul.

A little time we gain from time

To set our seasons in some chime,
For harsh or sweet or loud or low,
With seasons played out long ago
And souls that in their time and prime
Took part with summer or with snow,
Lived abject lives out or sublime,
And had their chance of seed to sow
For service or disservice done
To those days dead and this their son.

A little time that we may fill
 Or with such good works or such ill
 As loose the bonds or make them strong
 Wherein all manhood suffers wrong,
 By rose-hung river and light-foot rill

There are who rest not ; who think long
 Till they biscern as from a hill
 At the sun's hour of morning song,
 Known of souls only, and those souls free,
 The sacred spaces of the sea.

THE EVE OF REVOLUTION.

1.

THE trumpets of the four winds of the
 world
 From the ends of the earth blow battle ;
 the night heaves,
 With breasts palpitating and wings refurled,
 With passion of couched limbs, as one
 who grieves
 Sleeping, and in her sleep she sees incurled
 Dreams serpent-shapen, such as sickness
 weaves,
 Down the wild wind of vision caught and
 whirled,
 Dead leaves of sleep, thicker than autumn
 leaves,
 Shadows of storm-shaped things,
 Flights of dim tribes of kings,
 The reaping men that reap men for
 their sheaves,
 And, without grain to yield,
 Their scythe-swept harvest-field
 Thronged thick with men pursuing and
 fugitives,
 Dead foliage of the tree of sleep,
 Leaves blood-colored and golden, blown
 from deep to deep.

2.

I hear the midnight on the mountains cry
 With many tongues of thunders, and I
 hear
 Sound and resound the hollow shield of
 sky
 With trumpet-throated winds that charge
 and cheer,
 And through the roar of the hours that
 fighting fly,
 Through flight and fight and all the
 fluctuant fear,
 A sound sublimer than the heavens are
 high,
 A voice more instant than the winds are
 clear,

Say to my spirit, "Take
 Thy trumpet too, and make
 A rallying music in the void night's ear,
 Till the storm lose its track,
 And all the night go back ;
 Till, as through sleep false life knows
 true life near,
 Thou know the morning through the
 night,
 And through the thunder silence, and
 through darkness light.'

3.

I set the trumpet to my lips and blow.
 The height of night is shaken, the skies
 break,
 The winds and stars and waters come and
 go
 By fits of breath and light and sound,
 that wake
 As out of sleep, and perish as the show
 Built up of sleep, when all her strengths
 forsake
 The sense-compelling spirit ; the depths
 glow,
 The heights flash, and the roots and
 summits shake
 Of earth in all her mountains.
 And the inner foamless fountains
 And wellsprings of her fast-bound forces
 quake ;
 Yea, the whole air of life
 Is set on fire of strife,
 Till change unmake things made and
 love remake ;
 Reason and love, whose names are one,
 Seeing reason is the sunlight shed from love
 the sun.

4.

The night is broken eastward ; is it day,
 Or but the watchfires trembling here and
 there,

Like hopes on memory's devastated way,
In moonless wastes of planet-stricken
air?

O many-childed mother great and grey,
O multitudinous bosom, and breasts that
bare

O our fathers' generations, whereat lay
The weanling peoples and the tribes that
were,

Whose new-born mouths long dead
Those ninefold nipples fed,

Dim face with deathless eyes and wither-
ed hair,

Foress of obscure lands,

Whose multiplying hands

Wove the world's web with divers races
fair

And cast it waif-wise on the stream,
The waters of the centuries, where thou
sat'st to dream;

5.

O many-minded mother and visionary,
Asia, that sawest their westering waters
sweep

With all the ships and spoils of time to
carry

And all the fears and hopes of life to
keep,

Thy vesture wrought of ages legendary
Hides usward thine impenetrable sleep,
And thy veiled head, night's oldest tribu-
tary,

We know not if it speak or smile or weep.

But where for us began

The first live light of man

And first-born fire of deeds to burn and
leap,

The first war fair as peace

To shine and lighten Greece,

And the first freedom moved upon the
deep,

God's breath upon the face of time
Moving, a present spirit, seen of men
sublime;

6.

There where our east looks always to thy
west,

Our mornings to thine evenings, Greece
to thee,

These lights that catch the mountains crest
by crest,

Are they of stars or beacons that we see?

Taygetus takes here the winds abreast,
And there the sun resumes Thermopylæ;
The light is Athens where those remnants
rest,

And Salamis the sea-wall of that sea.

The grass men tread upon

Is very Marathon

The leaves are of that time-unstricken
tree

That storm nor sun can fret

Nor wind, since she that set

Made it her sign to men whose shield
was she;

Here, as dead time his deathless
things,

Eurotas and Cephissus keep their sleepless
springs.

7

O hills of Crete, are these things dead? O
waves,

O many-mouthed streams, are these
springs dry?

Earth, dost thou feed and hide now none
but slaves?

Heaven, hast thou heard of men that
would not die?

Is the land thick with only such men's
graves

As were ashamed to look upon the sky?

Ye dead, whose name outfaces and out-
braves

Death, is the seed of such as you gone by?

Sea, have thy ports not heard

Some Marathonian word

Rise up to landward and to Godward fly?

No thunder, that the skies

Sent not upon us, rise

With fire and earthquake and a cleaving
cry?

Nay, light is here, and shall be
light,

Though all the face of the hour be over-
borne with night.

8.

I set the trumpet to my lips and blow.

The night is broken northward; the pale
plains

And footless fields of sun-forgotten snow
Feel through their creviced lips and iron
veins

Such quick breath labor and such clean
blood flow

As summer-stricken spring feels in her
 pains
 When dying May bears June, too young to
 know
 The fruit that waxes from the flower that
 wanes ;
 Strange tyrannies and vast,
 Tribes frost-bound to their past,
 Lands that are loud all through their
 length with chains,
 Wastes where the wind's wings
 break,
 Displumed by daylong ache
 And anguish of blind snows and rack-
 blown rains,
 And ice that seals the White Sea's
 lips,
 Whose monstrous weights crush flat the
 sides of shrieking ships :

9.

Horrible sights and sounds of the unreached
 pole,
 And shrill fierce climes of inconsolable
 air,
 Shining below the beamless aureole
 That hangs about the north-wind's hurt-
 ling hair,
 A comet-lighted lamp, sublime and sole
 Dawn of the dayless heaven where suns
 despair :
 Earth, skies, and waters, smitten into soul,
 Feel the hard veil that iron centuries wear
 Rent as with hands in sunder,
 Such hands as make the thunder
 And clothe with form all substance and
 strip bare :
 Shapes, shadows, sounds and lights
 Of their dead days and nights
 Take soul of life too keen for death to
 bear ;
 Life, conscience, forethought, will,
 desire,
 Flood men's inanimate eyes and dry-drawn
 hearts with fire.

10.

Light, light, and light! to break and melt
 in sunder
 All clouds and chains that in one bond-
 age bind
 Eyes, hands, and spirits, forged by fear and
 wonder

And sleek fierce fraud with hidden knife
 behind ;
 There goes no fire from heaven before their
 thunder,
 Nor are the links not malleable that wind
 Round the snared limbs and souls that ache
 thereunder ;
 The hands are mighty, were the head not
 blind.
 Priest is the staff of king,
 And chains and clouds one thing,
 And fettered flesh with devastated mind.
 Open thy soul to see,
 Slave, and thy feet are free ;
 Thy bonds and thy beliefs are one in kind,
 And of thy fears thine irons wrought
 Hang weights upon thee fashioned out of
 thine own thought.

11.

O soul, O God, O glory of liberty,
 To night and day their lightning and
 their light !
 With heat of heart thou kindest the quick
 sea,
 And the dead earth takes spirit from thy
 sight ;
 The natural body of things is warm with
 thee,
 And the world's weakness parcel of thy
 might ;
 Thou seest us feeble and forceless, fit to be
 Slaves of the years that drive us left and
 right,
 Drowned under hours like waves
 Wherethrough we row like slaves ;
 But if thy finger touch us, these take
 flight.
 If but one sovereign word
 Of thy live lips be heard,
 What man shall stop us, and what God
 shall smite ?
 Do thou but look in our dead eyes,
 They are stars that light each other till thy
 sundawn rise.

12

Thou art the eye of this blind body of man,
 The tongue of this dumb people ; shalt
 thou not
 See, shalt thou speak not for them ? Time
 is wan
 And hope is weak with waiting, and swift
 thought

Hath lost the wings at heel wherewith he
 ran,
 And on the red pit's edge sits down dis-
 traught
 To talk with death of days republican
 And dreams and fights long since dreamt
 out and fought ;
 Of the last hope that drew
 To that red edge anew
 The firewhite faith of Poland without
 spot ;
 Of the blind Russian might,
 And fire that is not light ;
 Of the green Rhineland where thy spirit
 wrought ;
 But though time, hope, and memory
 tire,
 Cnast thou wax dark as they do, thou whose
 light is fire ?

13.

I set the trumpet to my lips and blow.
 The night is broken westward ; the wide
 sea
 That makes immortal motion to and fro
 From world's end unto world's end, and
 shall be
 When nought now grafted of men's hands
 shall grow
 And as the weed in last year's waves are
 we
 Or spray the sea-wind shook a year ago
 From its sharp tresses down the storm
 to lee,
 The moving god that hides
 Time in its timeless tides
 Wherein time dead seems live eternity,
 That breaks and makes again
 Much mightier things than men,
 Doth it not hear change coming, or not
 see ?
 Are the deeps deaf and dead and
 blind,
 To catch no light or sound from landward
 of mankind ?

14.

O thou, clothed round with raiment of
 white waves,
 Thy brave brows lightening through the
 grey wet air,
 Thou, lulled with sea-sounds of a thousand
 caves,
 And lit with sea-shine to thine inland lair,

Whose freedom clothed the naked souls of
 slaves
 And stripped the muffled souls of tyrants
 bare,
 O, by the centuries of thy glorious graves,
 By the live light of the earth that was thy
 care,
 Live, thou must not be dead,
 Live ; let thine armed head
 Lift itself up to sunward and the fair
 Daylight of time and man,
 Thine head republican,
 With the same splendor on thine helmless
 hair
 That in his eyes kept up a light
 Who on thy glory gazed away their sacred
 sight ;

15.

Who loved and looked their sense to death
 on thee ;
 Who taught thy lips imperishable things,
 And in thine ears outsang thy singing sea ;
 Who made thy foot firm on the necks of
 kings
 And thy soul somehow steadfast—woe are
 we
 It was but for a while, and all the strings
 Were broken of thy spirit ; yet had he
 Set to such tunes and clothed it with
 such wings
 It seemed for his sole sake
 Impossible to break,
 And woundless of the worm that waits
 and stings,
 The golden-headed worm
 Made headless for a term,
 The king-snake whose life kindles with
 the spring's,
 To breathe his soul upon her bloom,
 And while she marks not turn her temple
 to her tomb.

16.

By those eyes blinded and that heavenly
 head
 And the secluded soul adorable,
 O Milton's land, what ails thee to be dead ?
 Thine ears are yet sonorous with his shell
 That all the songs of all thy sea-line fed
 With motive sound of spring-tides at mid
 swell,
 And through thine heart his thought as
 blood is shed,

Requicken thee with wisdom to do
well ;

Such sons were of thy womb,
England, for love of whom

Thy name is not yet writ with theirs that
fell,

But, till thou quite forget
What were thy children, yet

On the pale lips of hope is as a spell ;

And Shelley's heart and Landor's
mind

Lit thee with latter watch-fires ; why wilt
thou be blind ?

17.

Though all were else indifferent, all that
live

Spiritless shapes of nations ; though
time wait

In vain on hope till these have help to give,
And faith and love crawl famished from
the gate ;

Canst thou sit shamed and self-contem-
plative

With soulless eyes on thy secluded fate ?

Though time forgive them, thee shall he
forgive

Whose choice was in thine hand to be so
great ?

Who cast out of thy mind

The passion of man's kind,

And made thee and thine old name sep-
arate ?

Now when time looks to see

New names and old and thee

Build up our one Republic state by state,

England with France, and France

with Spain,

And Spain with sovereign Italy strike
hands and reign.

18.

O known and unknown fountain-heads that
fill

Our dear life-springs of England ! O
bright race

Of streams and waters that bear witness
still

To the earth her sons were made of ! O
fair face

Of England, watched of eyes death cannot
kill,

How should the soul that lit you for a
space

Fall through sick weakness of a broken will
To the dead cold damnation of disgrace ?

Such wind of memory stirs

On all green hills of hers,

Such breath of record from so high a
place,

From years whose tongue of flame

Prophesied in her name

Her feet should keep truth's bright and
burning trace,

We needs must have her heart with
us,

Whose hearts are one with man's ; she must
must be dead or thus.

19.

Who is against us ? who is on our side ?

Whose heart of all men's hearts is one
with man's ?

Where art thou that wast prophetess and
bride,

When truth and thou trod under time and
chance ?

What latter light of what new hope shall
guide

Out of the snares of hell thy feet, O
France ?

What heel shall bruise these heads that hiss
and glide,

What wind-blow out these sun-born fires
that dance

Before thee to thy death ?

No light, no life, no breath,

From thy dead eyes and lips shall take
the trance,

Till on that deadliest crime

Reddening the feet of time

Who treads through blood and passes,
time shall glance

Pardon, and Italy forgive,

And Rome arise up whom thou slewest, and
bid thee live.

20.

I set the trumpet to my lips and blow.

The night is broken southward ; the
springs run,

The daysprings and the watersprings that
flow

Forth with one will from where their
source was one,

Out of the might of morning : high and low,
The hungering hills feed full upon the
sun,

The thirsting valleys drink of him and glow
 As a heart burns with some divine thing
 done,
 Or as blood burns again
 In the bruised heart of Spain,
 A rose renewed with red new life begun,
 Dragged down with thorns and
 briers,
 That puts forth buds like fires
 Till the whole tree take flower in unison,
 And prince that clogs and priest that
 clings
 Be cast as weeds upon the dunghill of dead
 things.

21.

Ah heaven, bow down, be nearer ! This is
 she,
 Italia, the world's wonder, the world's
 care,
 Free in her heart ere quite her hands be free,
 And lovelier than her loveliest robe of air.
 The earth hath voice, and speech is in the
 sea,
 Sounds of great joy, too beautiful to bear ;
 All things are glad because of her, but we
 Most glad, who loved her when the worst
 days were.
 O sweetest, fairest, first,
 O flower, when times were worst,
 Thou hadst no stripe wherein we had no
 share,
 Have not our hearts held close,
 Kept fast the whole world's rose ?
 Have we not worn thee at heart whom
 none would wear ?
 First love and last love, light of lands
 Shall we not touch thee full-blown with our
 lips and hands ?

22.

O too much loved, what shall we say of
 thee ?
 What shall we make of our heart's burn-
 ing fire,
 The passion in our lives that fain would be
 Made each a brand to pile into the pyre
 That shall burn up thy foemen, and set free
 The flame whence thy sun-shadowing
 wings aspire ?
 Love of our life, what more than men are we,
 That this our breath for thy sake should
 expire,
 For whom to joyous death
 Glad gods might yield their breath,

Great gods drop down from heaven to
 serve for hire ?
 We are but men, are we,
 And thou art Italy ;
 What shall we do for thee with our de-
 sire ?
 What gift shall we deserve to give ?
 How shall we die to do thee service or how
 live ?

23.

The very thought in us how much we love
 thee
 Makes the throat sob with love and blinds
 the eyes,
 How should love bear thee, to behold
 above thee
 His own light burning from reverberate
 skies ?
 They give thee light, but the light given
 them of thee
 Makes faint the wheeling fires that fall
 and rise.
 What love, what life, what death of man's
 should move thee,
 What face that lingers or what foot that
 flies ?
 It is not heaven that lights
 Thee with such days and nights,
 But thou that heaven is lit from in such
 wise.
 O thou her dearest birth,
 Turn thee to lighten earth,
 Earth too that bore thee and yearns to
 thee and cries ;
 Stand up, shine, lighten, become
 flame,
 Till as the sun's name through all nations
 be thy name.

24.

I take the trumpet from my lips and sing.
 O life immeasurable and imminent love,
 And fear like winter leading hope like
 spring,
 Whose flower-bright brows the day-star
 sits above,
 Whose hand unweariable and untiring wing
 Strike music from a world that wailed and
 strove,
 Each bright soul born and every glorious
 thing,
 From very freedom to man's joy thereof,
 O time, O change and death,
 Whose now not hateful breath

But gives the music swifter feet to move
 Through sharp remeasuring tones
 Of refulgent antiphones
 More tender-tuned than heart or throat
 of dove,
 Soul into soul, song into song,
 Life changing into life, by laws that work
 not wrong ;

25.

O natural force in spirit and sense, that art
 One thing in all things, fruit of thine
 own fruit,
 O thought illimitable and infinite heart
 Whose blood if life in limbs indissolute
 That still keeps hurtless thine invisible part
 And inextirpable thy viewless root
 Whence all sweet shafts of green and
 each thy dart
 Of sharpening leaf and bud resundering
 shoot ;
 Hills that the day-star hails,
 Heights that the first beam scales,
 And heights that souls outshining suns
 salute,
 Valleys for each mouth born
 Free now of plenteous corn,
 Waters and woodlands musical or mute ;
 Free winds that brighten brows as free
 And thunder and laughter and lightning of
 the sovereign sea ;

26.

Rivers and springs, and storms that seek
 your prey
 With strong wings ravening through the
 skies by night
 Spirits and stars that hold one choral way ;
 O light of heaven, and thou the heaven-
 lier light

Aflame above the souls of men that sway
 All generations of all years with might ;
 O sunrise of the repossessing day,
 And sunrise of all-renovating right ;
 And thou, whose trackless foot
 Mocks hope's or fear's pursuit,
 Swift Revolution, changing depth with
 height ;
 And thou, whose mouth makes one
 All songs that seek the sun,
 Serene Republic of a world made white ;
 Thou, Freedom, whence the soul's
 springs ran ;
 Praise earth for man's sake living, and for
 earth's sake man

27.

Make yourselves wings, O tarrying feet of
 fate,
 And hidden hour that hast our hope to
 bear,
 A child-god, through the morning-colored
 gate
 That lets love in upon the golden air,
 Dead on whose threshold lies heart-broken
 hate,
 Dead discord, dead injustice, dead despair ;
 O love long looked for, wherefore wilt
 thou wait,
 And shew not yet the dawn on thy bright
 hair,
 Not yet thine hand released
 Refreshing the faint east,
 Thine hand reconquering heaven, to seat
 man there ?
 Come forth, be born and live
 Thou that hast help to give
 And light to make man's day of man-
 hood fair ;
 With flight outflying the spherèd sun,
 Hasten thine hour and halt not, till thy
 work be done.

A WATCH IN THE NIGHT.

1.

WATCHMAN, what of the night ?—
 Storm and thunder and rain,
 Lights that waver and wane,
 Leaving the watchfires unlit.
 Only the balefires are bright,
 And the flash of the lamps now and then
 From a palace where spoilers sit,
 Trampling the children of men.

2.

Prophet, what of the night ?—
 I stand by the verge of the sea,
 Banished, uncomforted, free,
 Hearing the noise of the waves
 And sudden flashes that smite
 Some man's tyrannous head,
 Thundering, heard among graves
 That hide the hosts of his dead.

3.

Mourners, what of the night?—
 All night through without sleep
 We weep, and we weep, and we weep.
 Who shall give us our sons?
 Beaks of raven and kite,
 Mouths of wolf and of hound,
 Give us them back whom the guns
 Shot for your dead on the ground.

4.

Dead men, what of the night?—
 Cannon and scaffold and sword,
 Horror of gibbet and cord,
 Mowed us as sheaves for the grave,
 Mowed us down for the right.
 We do not grudge or repent.
 Freely to freedom we gave
 Pledges, till life should be spent.

5.

Statesman, what of the night?—
 The night will last me my time.
 The gold on a crown or a crime
 Looks well enough yet by the lamps.
 Have we not fingers to write,
 Lips to swear at a need?
 Then, when danger decamps,
 Bury the word with the deed.

6.

Warrior, what of the night?—
 Whether it be not or be
 Night, is as one thing to me.
 I for one, at the least,
 Ask not of dews if they blight,
 Ask not of flames if they slay,
 Ask not of prince or of priest
 How long ere we put them away

7.

Master, what of the night?—
 Child, night is not at all
 Anywhere, fallen or to fall,
 Save in our star-stricken eyes.
 Forth of our eyes it takes flight,
 Look we but once nor before
 Nor behind us, but straight on the skies
 Night is not then any more.

8.

Exile, what of the night?—
 The tides and the hours run out,
 The seasons of death and of doubt,
 The night-watches bitter and sore.
 In the quicksands leftward and right
 My feet sink down under me;
 But I know the scents of the shore
 And the broad blown breaths of the sea.

9.

Captives, what of the night?—
 It rains outside overhead
 Always, a rain that is red,
 And our faces are soiled with the rain.
 Here in the seasons' despite
 Day-time and night-time are one,
 Till the curse of the kings and the chain
 Break, and their toils be undone.

10.

Christian, what of the night?—
 I cannot tell; I am blind.
 I halt and hearken behind
 If haply the hours will go back
 And return to the dear dead light,
 To the watchfires and stars that of old
 Shone where the sky now is black,
 Glowed where the earth now is cold.

11.

High priest, what of the night?—
 The night is horrible here
 With haggard faces and fear,
 Blood, and the burning of fire.
 Mine eyes are emptied of sight,
 Mine hands are full of the dust,
 If the God of my faith be a liar,
 Who is it that I shall trust?

12.

Princes, what of the night?—
 Night with pestilent breath
 Feeds us, children of death
 Clothes us close with her gloom.
 Rapine and famine and fright
 Crouch at our feet and are fed.
 Earth where we pass is a tomb,
 Life where we triumph is dead.

13.

Martyrs, what of the night?—

Nay, is it night with you yet?

We, for our part, we forget

What night was, if it were.

The loud red mouth of the fight

Are silent and shut where we are.

In our eyes the tempestuous air

Shines as the face of a star.

14.

England, what of the night?—

Night is for slumber and sleep,

Warm, no season to weep.

Let me alone till the day.

Sleep would I still if I might,

Who have slept for two hundred years.

Once I had honor, they say;

But slumber is sweeter than tears.

15.

France, what of the night?—

Night is the prostitute's noon,

Kissed and drugged till she swoon,

Spat upon, trod upon, whored.

With bloodred rose-garlands dight,

Round me reels in the dance

Death, my saviour, my lord,

Crowned; there is no more France.

16.

Italy, what of the night?—

Ah, child, child, it is long!

Moonbeam and starbeam and song

Leave it dumb now and dark.

Yet I perceive on the height

Eastward, not now very far,

A song too loud for the lark,

A light too strong for a star.

17.

Germany, what of the night?—

Long has it lulled me with dreams;

Now at midwatch, as it seems,

Light is brought back to mine eyes,

And the mastery of old and the might

Ilives in the joints of mine hands,

Steadies my limbs as they rise,

Strengthens my foot as it stands.

18.

Europe, what of the night?—

Ask of heaven, and the sea

And my babes on the bosom of me,

Nations of mine, but ungrown.

There is one who shall surely requite

All that endure or that err:

She can answer alone:

Ask not of me, but of her.

19.

Liberty, what of the night?—

I feel not the red rains fall,

Hear not the tempest at all,

Nor thunder in heaven any more.

All the distance is white

With the soundless feet of the sun.

Night, with the woes that it wore,

Night is over and done.

SUPER FLUMINA BABYLONIS.

By the waters of Babylon we sat down and
wept,

Remembering thee,

That for ages of agony hast endured, and
slept,

And wouldst not see.

By the waters of Babylon we stood up and
sang,

Considering thee,

That a blast of deliverance in the darkness
rang,

To set thee free.

And with trumpets and thunderings and
with morning song

Came up the light;

And thy spirit uplifted thee to forget thy
wrong

As day doth night.

And thy sons were dejected not any more,
as then

When thou wast shamed;

When thy lovers went heavily without
heart, as men

Whose life was maimed.

In the desolate distances, with a great
desire,
For thy love's sake,
With our hearts going back to thee, they
were filled with fire,
Were none to break.

It was said to us : " Verily ye are great of
heart,
But ye shall bend ;
Ye are bondsmen and bondswomen, to be
scourged and smart,
To toil and tend."

And with harrows men harrowed us, and
subdued with spears,
And crushed with shame ;
And the summer and winter was, and the
length of years,
And no change came.

By the rivers of Italy, by the sacred streams,
By town, by tower,
There was feasting with revelling, there
was sleep with dreams,
Until thine hour.

And they slept and they rioted on their
rose-hung beds,
With mouths on flame,
And with love-locks vine-chapleted, and
with rose-crowned heads
And robes of shame.

And they knew not their forefathers, nor
the hills and streams
And words of power,
Nor the gods that were good to them, but
with songs and dreams
Filled up their hour.

By the rivers of Italy, by the dry streams'
beds,
When thy time came,
There was casting of crowns from them,
from their young men's heads,
The crowns of shame.

By the horn of Eridanus, by the Tiber
mouth,
As thy day rose,
They arose up and girded them to the
north and south,
By seas, by snows.

As a water in January the frost confines,
Thy kings bound thee ;
As a water in April is, in the new-blown
vines,
Thy sons made free.

And thy lovers that looked for thee, and
that mourned from far,
For thy sake dead,
We rejoiced in the light of thee, in the
signal star
Above thine head.

In thy grief had we followed thee, in thy
passion loved,
Loved in thy loss ;
In thy shame we stood fast to thee, with
thy pangs were moved,
Clung to thy cross.

By the hillside of Calvary we beheld thy
blood,
Thy bloodred tears,
As a mother's in bitterness, an unebbing
flood,
Years upon years.

And the north was Gethsemane, without
leaf or bloom,
A garden sealed ;
And the south was Aeldama, for a sanguine
fume
Hid all the field.

By the stone of the sepulchre we returned
to weep,
From far, from prison ;
And the guards by it keeping it we beheld
asleep,
But thou wast risen.

And an angel's similitude by the unsealed
grave,
And by the stone :
And the voice was angelical, to whose
words God gave
Strength like his own.

" Lo, the graveclothes of Italy that are
folded up
In the grave's gloom !
And the guards as men wrought upon with
charmed cup,
By the open tomb

"And her body most beautiful, and her
shining head,
These are not here ;
For your mother, for Italy, is not surely
dead :
Have ye no fear.

"As of old time she spake to you, and you
hardly heard,
Hardly took heed,
So now also she saith to you, yet another
word,
Who is risen indeed.

"By my saying she saith to you, in your
ears she saith,
Who hear these things,
Put no trust in men's royalties, nor in
great men's breath,
Nor words of kings.

"For the life of them vanishes and is no
more seen,
Nor no more known ;
Nor shall any remember him if a crown
hath been,
Or where a throne.

"Unto each man his handiwork, unto each
his crown,
The just Fate gives ;
Whoso takes the world's life on him and his
own lays down,
He, dying so, lives.

"Whoso bears the whole heaviness of the
wronged world's weight
And puts it by,
It is well with him suffering, though he face
man's fate ;
How should he die ?

"Seeing death has no part in him any more,
no power
Upon his head ;
He has bought his eternity with a little hour,
And is not dead.

"For an hour, if ye look for him, he is no
more found,
For one hour's space ;
Then ye lift up your eyes to him and behold
him crowned,
A deathless face.

"On the mountains of memory, by the
world's well-springs,
In all men's eyes,
Where the light of the life of him is on all
past things,
Death only dies.

"Not the light that was quenched for us,
nor the deeds that were,
Nor the ancient days,
Nor the sorrows not sorrowful, nor the face
most fair
Of perfect praise."

So the angel of Italy's resurrection said,
So yet he saith ;
So the son of her suffering, that from breasts
nigh dead
Drew life, not death.

That the pavement of Golgotha should be
white as snow,
Not red, but white ;
That the waters of Babylon should no longer
flow,
And men see light.

THE HALT BEFORE ROME.

SEPTEMBER. 1867.

Is it so, that the sword is broken,
Our sword, that was halfway drawn ?
Is it so, that the light was a spark,
That the bird we hailed as the lark
Sang in her sleep in the dark,
And the song we took for a token
Bore false witness of dawn ?

Spread in the sight of the lion,
Surely, we said, is the net
Spread but in vain, and the snare
Vain ; for the light is aware,
And the common, the chainless air,
Of his coming whom all we cry on ;
Surely in vain is it set.

Surely the day is on our side,
 And heaven, and the sacred sun ;
 Surely the stars, and the bright
 Immemorial inscrutable night :
 Yea, the darkness, because of our light,
 Is no darkness, but blooms as a bower-side
 When the winter is over and done ;

Blooms underfoot with young grasses
 Green, and with leaves overhead,
 Windflowers white, and the low
 New-dropped blossoms of snow ;
 And or ever the May winds blow,
 And or ever the March wind passes,
 Flames with anemones red.

We are here in the world's bower-garden,
 We that have watched out the snow.
 Surely the fruitfuller showers,
 The splendor sunbeams are ours ;
 Shall winter return on the flowers,
 And the frost after April harden,
 And the fountains in May not flow ?

We have in our hands the shining
 And the fire in our hearts of a star.
 Who are we that our tongues should palter,
 Hearts bow down, hands falter,
 Who are clothed as with flame from the
 altar,
 That the kings of the earth, repining,
 Far off, watch from afar ?

Woe is ours if we doubt or dissemble,
 Woe, if our hearts not abide.
 Are our chiefs not among us, we said,
 Great chiefs, living and dead,
 To lead us glad to be led ?
 For whose sake, if a men of us tremble
 He shall not be on our side.

What matter if these lands tarry,
 That tarried (we said) not of old ?
 France, made drunken by fate,
 England, that bore-up the weight
 Once of men's freedom, a freight
 Holy, but heavy to carry
 For hands overflowing with gold.

Though this be lame, and the other
 Fleet, but blind from the sun,
 And the race be no more to these,
 Alas ! nor the palm to seize,
 Who are weary and hungry of ease,
 Yet, O Freedom, we said, O our mother,
 Is there not left to thee one ?

Is there not left of thy daughters,
 Is there not one to thine hand ?
 Fairer of these, and of fame
 Higher from of old by her name ;
 Washed in her tears, and in flame
 Bathed as in baptism of waters,
 Unto all men a chosen land.

Her hope in her heart was broken,
 Fire was upon her, and clomb,
 Hiding her, high as her head ;
 And the world went past her and said
 (We heard it say) she was dead ;
 And now, behold, she hath spoken,
 She that was dead, saying, "Rome."

O mother of all men's nations,
 Thou knowest if the deaf world heard !
 Heard not now to her lowest
 Depths, where the strong blood slowest
 Beats at her bosom, thou knowest,
 In her toils, in her dim tribulations,
 Rejoiced not, hearing the word.

The sorrowful, bound unto sorrow,
 The woe-worn people, and all
 That of old were discomfited,
 And men that famish for bread,
 And men that mourn for their dead,
 She bade them be glad on the morrow,
 Who endured in the day of her thrall.

The blind, and the people in prison,
 Souls without hope, without home,
 How glad were they all that heard !
 When the winged white flame of the word
 Passed over men's dust, and stirred
 Death ; for Italia was risen,
 And risen her light upon Rome.

The light of her sword in the gateway
 Shone, an unquenchable flame,
 Bloodless, a sword to release,
 A light from the eyes of peace,
 To bid grief utterly cease,
 And the wrong of the old world straight-
 way
 Pass from the face of her fame :

Hers, whom we turn to and cry on,
 Italy, mother of men :
 From the light of the face of her glory,
 At the sound of the storm of her story,
 That the sanguine shadows and hoary
 Should flee from the foot of the lion,
 Lion-like, forth of his den.

As the answering of thunder to thunder
 Is the storm-beaten sound of her past ;
 As the calling of sea unto sea
 Is the noise of her years yet to be ;
 For this ye knew not is she,
 Whose bonds are broken in sunder ;
 This is she at the last.

So spake we aloud, high-minded,
 Full of our will ; and behold,
 The speech that was half-way spoken
 Breaks, as a pledge that is broken,
 As a king's pledge, leaving in token
 Grief only for high hopes blinded,
 New grief grafted on old.

We halt by the walls of the city,
 Within sound of the clash of her chain.
 Hearing, we know that in there
 The lioness chafes in her lair,
 Shakes the storm of her hair,
 Struggles in hands without pity.
 Roars to the lion in vain.

Whose hand is stretched forth upon her ?
 Whose curb is white with her foam ?
 Clothed with the cloud of his deeds,
 Swathed in the shroud of his creeds,
 Who is this that has trapped her and leads,
 Who turns to despair and dishonor
 Her name, her name that was Rome ?

Over fields without harvest or culture,
 Over hords without honor or love,
 Over nations that groan with their kings,
 As an imminent pestilence flings
 Swift death from her shadowing wings,
 So he, who hath claws as a vulture,
 Plumage and beak as a dove.

He saith, "I am pilot and haven,
 Light and redemption I am
 Unto souls overlabored," he saith ;
 And to all men the blast of his breath
 Is a savour of death unto death ;
 And the Dove of his worship a raven,
 And a wolf-cub the life-giving Lamb.

He calls his sheep as a shepherd,
 Calls from the wilderness home,
 "Come unto me and be fed,"
 To feed them with ashes for bread
 And grass from the graves of the dead,
 Leaps on the fold as a leopard,
 Slays, and says, "I am Rome."

Rome, having rent her in sunder,
 With the clasp of an adder he clasps ;
 Swift to shed blood are his feet,
 And his lips, that have man for their meat,
 Smoother than oil, and more sweet
 Than honey, but hidden thereunder
 Festers the poison of asps.

As swords are his tender mercies,
 His kisses as mortal stings :
 Under his hallowing hands
 Life dies down in all lands
 Kings pray to him, prone where he stands,
 And his blessings, as other men's curses,
 Disanoint where they consecrate kings.

With an oil of unclean consecration,
 With effusion of blood and of tears,
 With uplifting of cross and of keys,
 Priest, though thou hallow us these,
 Yet even as they cling to thy knees
 Nation awakens by nation,
 King by king disappears.

How shall the spirit be loyal
 To the shell of a spiritless thing ?
 Erred once, in only a word,
 The sweet great song that we heard
 Poured upon Tuscany, erred,
 Calling a crowned man royal
 That was no more than a king.

Sea-eagle of English feather,
 A song-bird beautiful-souled,
 She knew not them that she sang ;
 The golden trumpet that rang
 From Florence, in vain for them, sprang
 As a note in the nightingales' weather
 Far over Fiesole rolled.

She saw not—happy, not seeing—
 Saw not as we with her eyes
 Aspromonte ; she felt
 Never the heart in her melt
 As in us when the news was dealt
 Melted all hope out of being,
 Dropped all dawn from the skies.

In that weary funeral season,
 In that heart-stricken grief-ridden time,
 The weight of a king and the worth,
 With anger and sorrowful mirth,
 We weighed in the balance of earth,
 And light was his word as a treason,
 And heavy his crown as a crime.

Banners of kings shall ye follow
 None, and have thrones on your side
 None ; ye shall gather and grow
 Silently, row upon row,
 Chosen of Freedom to go
 Gladly where darkness may swallow,
 Gladly where death may divide.

Have we not men with us royal,
 Men the masters of things?
 In the days when our life is made new,
 All souls perfect and true
 Shall adore whom their forefathers slew ;
 And these indeed shall be loyal,
 And those indeed shall be kings.

Yet for a space they abide with us,
 Yet for a little they stand,
 Bearing the heat of the day.
 When their presence is taken away,
 We shall wonder and worship, and say,
 " Was not a star on our side with us ?
 Was not a God at our hand ? "

These, O men, shall ye honor,
 Liberty only, and these.
 For thy sake and for all men's and mine,
 Brother, the crowns of them shine
 Lighting the way to her shrine,
 That our eyes may be fastened upon her,
 That our hands may encompass her knees.

In this day is the sign of her shown to you ;
 Choose ye, to live or to die.
 Now is her harvest in hand ;
 Now is her light in the land ;
 Choose ye, to sink or to stand,
 For the might of her strength is made
 known to you
 Now, and her arm is on high.

Serve not for any man's wages,
 Pleasure nor glory nor gold ;
 Not by her side are they won
 Who saith unto each of you, " Son,
 Silver and gold have I none ;
 I give but the love of all ages,
 And the life of my people of old. "

Fear not for any man's terrors ;
 Wait not for any man's word ;
 Patiently, each in his place,
 Gird up your loins to the race ;
 Following the print of her pace,
 Purged of desires and of errors.
 March to the tune ye have heard.

March to the tune of the voice of her,
 Breathing the balm of her breath,
 Loving the light of her skies.
 Blessed is he on whose eyes
 Dawns but her light as he dies ;
 Blessed are ye that make choice of her,
 Equal to life and to death.

Ye that when faith is nigh frozen,
 Ye that when hope is nigh gone,
 Still, over wastes, over waves,
 Still, among wrecks, among graves,
 Follow the splendor that saves,
 Happy, her children, her chosen,
 Loyal to her on.

The sheep of the priests, and the cattle
 That feed in the penfolds of kings,
 Sleek is their flock and well-fed ;
 Hardly she giveth you bread,
 Hardly a rest for the head,
 Till the day of the blast of the battle
 And the storm of the wind of her wings.

Ye that have joy in your living,
 Ye that are careful to live,
 You her thunders go by :
 Live, let men be, let them lie,
 Serve your season, and die ;
 Gifts have your masters for giving,
 Gifts hath not Freedom to give ;

She, without shelter or station,
 She, beyond limit or bar,
 Urges to slumberless speed
 Armies that famish, that bleed,
 Sowing their lives for her seed,
 That their dust may rebuild her a nation,
 That their souls may relight her a star.

Happy are all they that follow her ;
 Them shall no trouble cast down ;
 Though she slay them, yet shall they trust
 in her,
 For unsure there is nought nor unjust in her,
 Blemish is none, neither rust in her ;
 Though it threaten, the night shall not
 swallow her,
 Tempest and storm shall not drown.

Hither, O strangers, that cry for her,
 Holding your lives in your hands,
 Hither, for here is your light,
 Where Italy is, and her might ;
 Strength shall be given you to fight,
 Grace shall be given you to die for her,
 For the flower, for the lady of lands ;

Turn ye, whose anguish oppressing you
 Crushes, asleep and awake,
 For the wrong which is wrought as of yore ;
 That Italia may give of her store,
 Having these things to give and no more ;
 Only her hands on you, blessing you ;
 Only a pang for her sake ;

Only her bosom to die on ;
 Only her heart for a home,
 And a name with her children to be
 From Calabrian to Adrian sea
 Famous in cities made free
 That ring to the roar of the lion
 Proclaiming republican Rome.

MENTANA: FIRST ANNIVERSARY.

At the time when the stars are grey,
 And the gold of the molten moon
 Fades, and the twilight is thinned,
 And the sun leaps up, and the wind,
 Alight rose, not of the day,
 A stronger light than of noon.

As the light of a face much loved
 Was the face of the light that clomb
 As a mother whitened with woes
 Her adorable head that arose ;
 As the sound of a god that is moved,
 Her voice went forth upon Rome.

At her lips it fluttered and tailed
 Twice, and sobbed into song,
 And sank as a flame sinks under ;
 Then spake, and the speech was thunder,
 And the cheek as he heard it paled
 Of the wrongdoer grown grey with the
 wrong.

"Is it time, is it time appointed,
 Angel of time, is it near ?
 For the spent night aches into day
 When the kings shall slay not or pray,
 And the high-priest, accursed and anointed,
 Sickness to deathward with fear.

"For the bones of my slain are stirred,
 And the seed of my earth in her womb
 Moves as the heart of a bud
 Beating with odorous blood
 To the tune of the loud first bird
 Burns and yearns into bloom.

"I lay my hand on her bosom,
 My hand on the heart of my earth,
 And I feel as with shiver and sob
 The triumphant heart in her throb,
 The dead petals dilate into blossom,
 The divine blood beat into birth.

"O my earth, are the springs in thee dry?
 O sweet, is thy body a tomb ?
 Nay, springs out of springs derive,
 And summers from summers alive,
 And the living from them that die ;
 No tomb is here, but a womb.

"O manifold womb and divine,
 Give me fruit of my children, give !
 I have given thee my dew for thy root,
 Give thou me for my mouth of thy fruit ;
 Thine are the dead that are mine,
 And mine are thy sons that live.

"O goodly children, O strong
 Italian spirits, that wear
 Could time or the world misdoubt you,
 My glories as garments about you,
 Behold, in disproof of the wrong,
 The field of the grave-pits there.

"And ye that fell upon sleep,
 We have you too with us yet.
 Fairer than life or than youth
 Is this, to die for the truth :
 No death can sink you so deep
 As their graves whom their brethren for-
 get.

"Were not your pains as my pains ?
 As my name are your names not divine ?
 Was not the light in your eyes
 Mine, the light of my skies,
 And the sweet shed blood of your veins,
 O my beautiful martyrs, mine ?

"Of mine earth were your dear limbs
 made,
 Of mine air was your sweet life's breath ;
 At the breasts of my love ye were fed,
 O my children, my chosen, my dead,
 At my breasts where again ye are laid,
 At the old mother's bosom, in death.

"But ye that live. O their brothers,
 Be ye to me as they were ;
 Give me, my children that live,
 What these dead grudged not to give,
 Who alive were son's of your mother's,
 Whose lips drew breath of your air.

"Till darkness by dawn be cloven,
 Let youth's self mourn and abstain ;
 And love's self find not an hour,

And spring's self wear not a flower,
 And Lycoris, with hair unenwoven,
 Hail back to the banquet in vain.

"So sooner and surer the glory
 That is not with us shall be,
 And stronger the hands that smite
 The heads of the sons of night,
 And the sound throughout earth of our story
 Give all men heart to be free."

BLESSED AMONG WOMEN.

TO THE SIGNORA CAIROLI.

1.

BLESSED was she that bare,
 Hidden in flesh most fair,
 For all men's sake the likeness of all love ;
 Holy that virgin's womb,
 The old record saith, on whom
 The glory of God alighted as a dove ;
 Blessed, who brought to gracious
 birth
 The sweet-souled Saviour of a man-tor-
 mented earth.

2.

But four times art thou blest,
 At whose most holy breast
 Four times a godlike soldier-saviour hung ;
 And thence a fourfold Christ
 Given to be sacrificed
 To the same cross as the same bosom clung ;
 Poured the same blood, to leave the
 same
 Light on the many-folded mountain-skirts
 of fame.

3.

Shall they and thou not live,
 The children thou didst give
 Forth of thine hands, a godlike gift, to
 death,
 Through fire of death to pass
 For her high sake that was
 Thine and their mother, that gave all you
 breath ?
 Shall ye not live till time drop dead,
 O mother, and each her children's conse-
 crated head ?

4.

Many brought gifts to take
 For her love's supreme sake,
 Life and life's love, pleasure and praise
 and rest,
 And went forth bare ; but thou,
 So much once richer, and now
 Poorer than all these, more than these be
 blest ;
 Poorer so much, by so much given,
 Than who gives earth for heaven's sake,
 not for earth's sake heaven.

5.

Somewhat could each soul save,
 What thing soever it gave,
 But thine, mother, what has thy soul kept
 back ?
 None of thine all, not one,
 To serve thee and be thy son,
 Feed with love all thy days, lest one day
 lack ;
 All thy whole life's love, thine
 heart's whole,
 Thou hast given as who gives gladly, O
 thou the supreme soul.

6.

The heart's pure flesh and blood,
 The heaven thy motherhood,
 The live lips, the live eyes, that lived on
 thee ;
 The hands that clove with sweet
 Blind clutch to thine, the feet
 That felt on earth their first way to thy
 knee ;

The little laughter of mouths milk-fed,
Now open again to feed on dust among the dead ;

7.

The fair, strong, young men's strength,
Light of life-days and length,
And glory of earth seen under and stars above,
And years that bring to tame
Now the wild falcon fame,
Now, to stroke smooth, the dove-white breast of love ;
The life unliv'd, the unsown seeds,
Suns un beholden, sons unsung, and undone deeds.

8.

Th fore shall man's love be
As own son to thee,
And the world's worship of thee for a child ;
All thine own land as one
New-born, a nursing son,
All thine own people a new birth undefiled ;
And all the unborn Italian time,
And all its glory, and all its works, thy seed sublime.

9.

That henceforth no man's breath,
Saying " Italy," but saith
In that Most sovereign word thine equal name ;
Nor can one speak of thee
But he saith " Italy,"
Seeing in two sons one co-eternal flame ;
One heat, one heaven, one heart,
One fire,
One light, one love, one benediction, one desire.

10.

Blest above praise and prayer
And incense of men's air,
Thy place is higher than where such voices rise
As in men's temples make
Music for some vain sake,
This God's or that God's, in one weary wise ;
Thee the soul silent, the shut heart,

The locked lips of the spirit praise thee
that thou art.

I

Yea, for man's whole life's length,
And with man's whole soul's strength,
We praise thee, O holy, and bless thee, O mother of lights ;
And send forth as on wings
The world's heart's thanksgiving
Song-birds to sing thy days through and thy nights ;
And wrap thee around and arch thee above
With the air of benediction and the heaven of love.

12.

And toward thee our unbreathed words
Fly speechless, winged as birds,
As the Indian flock, children of Paradise,
The winged things without feet,
Fed with God's dew for meat,
That live in the air and light of the utter skies ;
So fleet, so flying a footless flight,
With wings for fleet love seeks thee, to partake thy sight.

13.

Love like a clear sky spread
Bends over thy loved head,
As a new heaven bends over a new-born earth,
When the old night's womb is great
With young stars passionate
And fair new planets fiery-fresh from birth ;
And moon-white here, there hot like Mars,
Souls that are worlds shine on thee, spirits that are stars.

14.

Till the whole sky burns through
With heaven's own heart-deep hue,
With passion-colored glories of lit souls ;
And thine above all names
Writ highest with lettering flames
Lightens, and all the old starriest auroles
And all the old holiest memories wane,

And the old names of love's chosen, found
in thy sight vain.

15.

And crowned heads are dethroned,
And stars sink without sound,
And love's self for thy love's sake waxes
pale ;
Seeing from his storied skies
In what new reverent wise
Thee Rome's most highest, her sovereign
daughters, hail ;
Thee Portia, thee Veturia grey,
Thee Arria, thee Cornelia, Roman more
than they.

16.

Even all these as all we
Subdue themselves to thee,
Bow their heads haloed, quench their fiery
fame ;
Seen through dim years divine,
Their faint lights feminine
Sink, then spring up rekindled from thy
flame ;
Fade, then reflower and reillumine
From thy fresh spring their wintering age
with new-blown bloom.

17.

To thy much holier head
Even theirs, the holy and dead,
Bow themselves each one from her heaven-
ward height ;
Each in her shining turn,
All tremble toward thee and yearn
To melt in thine their consummated light ;
Till from day's Capitolian dome
One glory of many glories lighten upon
Rome.

18.

Hush thyself, song, and cease,

But you, with sweet shut eyes,
Heart-hidden memories,
Dreams and dumb thoughts that what
things have been
Silent, and pure of all words said,
Praise without song the living, without dirge
the dead.

19.

Thou, strengthless in these things,
Song, fold thy feeble wings,
And as a pilgrim go forth girt and shod.
And where the new graves are,
And where the sunset star,
To the pure spirit of man that men call God,
To the high soul of things, that is
Made of men's heavenlier hopes and might-
ier memories ;

20.

To the elements that make
For the soul's living sake
This raiment of dead things, of shadow and
trance,
That give us chance and time
Wherein to aspire and climb
And set our life's work higher than time or
chance ;
The old sacred elements, that give
The breath of life to days that die, to deeds
that live ;

21.

To them, veiled gods and great,
There bow thee and dedicate
Thy speechless spirit in these thy weak words
hidden ;
And mix thy reverent breath
With holier air of death,
At the high feast of sorrow a guest unbidden,
Till with divine triumphal tears
Thou fill men's eyes who listen with a
heart that hears.

THE LITANY OF NATIONS.

μᾶ ἱᾶ, μᾶ Γᾶ, βοᾶν
φοβερὸν ἀπότρειε.

ÆSCH. *Supp.* 890.

CHORUS.

IF with voice of words or prayers thy sons
may reach thee,
We thy latter sons, the men thine after-
birth,
We the children of thy grey-grown age,
O Earth,
O our mother everlasting, we beseech thee,
By the sealed and secret ages of thy life ;
By the darkness wherein grew thy sacred
forces ;
By the songs of stars thy sisters in their
courses ;
By thine own song hoarse and hollow and
shrill with strife ;
By thy voice distuned and marred of modu-
lation ;
By thy discord of thy measures march
with theirs ;
By the beauties of thy bosom, and the
cares ;
By thy glory of growth, and the splendor
of thy station ;
By the shame of men thy children, and the
pride ;
By the pale-cheeked hope that sleeps and
weeps and passes,
As the grey dew from the morning
mountain-grasses ;
By the white-lipped sightless memories
that abide ;
By the silence and the sound of many
sorrows ;
By the joys that leapt up living and fell
dead ;
By the veil that hides thy hands and
breasts and head,
Wrought of divers colored days and nights
and morrows ;
Isis, thou that knowest of God what worlds
are worth,
Thou the ghost of God, the mother un-
created,

Soul for whom the floating forceless ages
waited
As our forceless fancies wait on thee, O
Earth ;
Thou the body and soul, the father-God
and mother,
If at all it move thee, knowing of all
things done
Here where evil things and good things
are not one,
But their faces are as fire against each other ;
By thy morning and thine evening, night
and day ;
By the first white light that stirs and
strives and hovers
As a bird above the brood her bosom
covers,
By the sweet last star that takes the west-
ward way ;
By the night whose feet are shod with snow
or thunder,
Fledged with plumes of storm, or sound-
less as the dew ;
By the vesture bound of many-folded
blue
Round her breathless breasts, and all the
woven wonder ;
By the golden-growing eastern stream of
sea ;
By the sounds of sunrise moving in the
mountains ;
By the forces of the floods and unsealed
fountains ;
Thou that badest man be born, bid man be
free.

GREECE.

I am she that made thee lovely with my
beauty
From north to south ;
Mine, the fairest lips, took first the fire of
duty
From thine own mouth.

Mine, the fairest eyes, sought first thy laws
 and knew them
 Truths undefiled ;
 Mine, the fairest hands, took freedom first
 into them,
 A weanling child.
 By my light, now he lies sleeping, seen
 above him
 Where none sees other ;
 By my dead that loved and living men that
 love him ;
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother.

ITALY.

I am she that was the light of thee en-
 kindled
 When Greece grew dim ;
 She whose life grew up with man's free life,
 and dwindled
 With wane of him
 She that once by sword and once by word
 imperial
 Struck bright thy gloom ;
 And a third time, casting off these years
 funeral,
 Shall burst thy tomb.
 By that bond 'twixt thee and me whereat
 affrighted
 Thy tyrants fear us ;
 By that hope and this remembrance re-
 united ;
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us.

SPAIN.

I am she that set my seal upon the name-
 less
 West worlds of seas ;
 And my sons as brides took unto them the
 tameless
 Hesperides.
 Till my sins and sons through sinless lands
 dispersèd,
 With red flame shod,
 Made accurst the name of man, and thrice
 accursèd
 The name of God.
 Lest for those past fires the fires of my re-
 pentance
 Hell's fume yet smother,
 Now my blood would buy remission of my
 sentence ;
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother.

FRANCE.

I am she that was thy sign and standard-
 bearer,
 Thy voice and cry ;
 She that washed thee with her blood and
 left thee fairer,
 The same was I.
 Were not these the hands that raised thee
 fallen and fed thee,
 These hands defiled ?
 Was not I thy tongue that spake, thine eye
 that led thee,
 Not I thy child ?
 By the darkness on our dreams, and the
 dead errors
 Of dead times near us ;
 By the hopes that hang around thee, and
 the terrors ;
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us.

RUSSIA.

I am she whose hands are strong and her
 eyes blinded
 And lips athirst
 Till upon the night of nations many-minded
 One bright day burst :
 Till the myriad stars be molten into one
 light,
 And that light thine ;
 Till the soul of man be parcel of the sun-
 light,
 And thine of mine.
 By the snows that blanch not him nor
 cleanse from slaughter
 Who slays his brother ;
 By the stains and by the chains on me thy
 daughter ;
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother

SWITZERLAND.

I am she that shews on mighty limbs and
 maiden
 Nor chain nor stain ;
 For what blood can touch these hands with
 gold unladen,
 These feet what chain ?
 By the surf of spears one shieldless bosom
 breasted
 And was my shield,
 Till the plume-plucked Austrian vulture-
 heads twin crested
 Twice drenched the field ;

By the snows and souls untrampled and
untroubled

That shine to cheer us,

Light of those to these responsive and re-
doubled ;

(*Cho.*) O mother, hear us.

GERMANY.

I am she beside whose forest-hidden foun-
tains

Slept freedom armed,

By the magic born to music in my
mountains

Heart-chained and charmed.

By those days the very dream whereof
delivers

My soul from wrong ;

By the sounds that make of all my ringing
rivers

None knows what song ;

By the many tribes and names of my division
One from another ;

By the single eye of sun-compelling vision ;
(*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother.

ENGLAND.

I am she that was and was not of thy
chosen,

Free, and not free ;

She that fed thy springs, till now her springs
are frozen ;

Yet I am she.

By the sea that clothed and sun that saw
me splendid

And fame that crowned.

By the song-fires and the sword-fires mixed
and blended

That robbed me round ;

By the star that Milton's soul for Shelley's
lighted,

Whose rays insphere us ;

By the beacon-bright Republic far-off
sighted ;

(*Cho.*) O mother, hear us.

CHORUS.

Turn away from us the cross-blown blasts
of error,

That drown each other ;

Turn away the fearful cry, the loud tongued
terror,

O Earth, O mother.

Turn away their eyes who track, their hearts
who follow,

The pathless past ;

Shew the soul of man, as summer shows the
swallow,

The way at last.

By the sloth of men that all too long endure
men

On man to tread ;

By the cry of men, the bitter cry of poor
men

That faint for bread ;

By the blood-sweat of the people in the
garden

Inwalled of kings ;

By his passion interceding for their pardon
Who do these things ;

By the sightless souls and fleshless limbs
that labor

For not their fruit ;

By the foodless mouth with foodless heart
for neighbor,

That, mad, is mute ;

By the child that famine eats as worms the
blossom

—Ah God, the child !

By the milkless lips that strain the blood-
less bosom

Till woe runs wild ;

By the pastures that give grass to feed the
lamb in,

Where men lack meat ;

By the cities clad with gold and shame and
famine ;

By field and street ;

By the people, by the poor man, by the
master

That men call slave ;

By the cross-winds of defeat and of disaster,
By wreck by wave ;

By the helm that keeps us still to sunwards
driving,

Still eastward bound,

Till, as night-watch ends, day burn on eyes
reviving,

And land be found :

We thy children, that arraign not nor im-
peach thee

Though no star steer us,

By the waves that wash the morning we
beseech thee,

O mother, hear us,

HERTHA.

I AM that which began ;
 Out of me the years roll ;
 Out of me God and man ;
 I am equal and Whole ;
 God changes, and man, and the form of
 them bodily ; I am the soul.

Before ever land was,
 Before ever the sea,
 Or soft hair of the grass,
 Or fair limbs of the tree,
 Or the flesh-colored fruit of my branches,
 I was, and thy soul was in me.

First life on my sources
 First drifted and swam ;
 Out of me are the forces
 That save it or damn ;
 Out of me man and woman, and wild-beast
 and bird ; before God was, I am.

Beside or above me
 Nought is there to go ;
 Love or unlove me,
 Unknow me or know,
 I am that which unloves me and loves ; I
 am stricken, and I am the blow.

I the mark that is missed
 And the arrows that miss,
 I the mouth that is kissed
 And the breath in the kiss,
 The search, and the sought, and the seeker,
 the soul and the body that is.

I am that thing which blesses
 My spirit elate ;
 That which caresses
 With hands uncreate
 My limbs unbegotten that measure the
 length of the measure of fate.

But what thing dost thou now,
 Looking Godward, to cry
 " I am I, thou art thou,
 I am low, thou art high ?"
 I am thou, whom thou seekest to find him ;
 find thou but thyself, thou art I.

I the grain and the furrow,
 The plough-cloven clod
 And the ploughshare drawn
 thorough,
 The germ and the sod,
 The deed and the doer, the seed and the
 sower, the dust which is God.

Has thou known how I fashioned
 thee,
 Child, underground ?
 Fire that impassioned thee,
 Iron that bound,
 Dim changes of water, what thing of all
 these hast thou known of or found ?

Canst thou say in thine heart
 Thou has seen with thine eyes
 With what cunning of art
 Thou wast wrought in what wise,
 By what force of what stuff thou wast shap-
 en, and shown on my breast to the skies ?

Who hath given, who hath sold it
 thee,
 Knowledge of me ?
 Hath the wilderness told it thee ?
 Hast thou learnt of the sea ?
 Hast thou communed in spirit with night ?
 have the winds taken counsel with thee ?

Have I set such a star
 To show light on thy brow
 That thou sawest from afar
 What I show to thee now ?
 Have ye spoken as brethren together, the
 sun and the mountains and thou ?

What is here, dost thou know it ?
 What was, hast thou known ?
 Prophet nor poet
 Nor tripod nor throne
 Nor spirit nor flesh can make answer, but
 only thy mother alone.

Mother, not maker, .
 Born, and not made ;
 Though her children forsake her,
 Allured or afraid,
 Praying prayers to the God of their fashion,
 she stirs not for all that have prayed.

A creed is a rod,
And a crown is of night ;
But this thing is God,
To be man with thy might,
To grow straight in the strength of thy
spirit, and live out thy life as the light.

I am in thee to save thee,
As my soul in thee saith,
Give thou as I gave thee,
Thy life-blood and breath,
Green leaves of thy labor, white flowers of
thy thought, and red fruit of thy death.

Be the ways of thy giving
As mine were to thee ;
The free life of thy living,
Be the gift of it free ;
Not as servant to lord, nor as master to
slave, shalt thou give thee to me.

O children of banishment,
Souls overcast,
Were the lights ye see vanish meant
Always to last,
Ye would know not the sun overshining the
shadows and stars overpast.

I saw where ye trod
The dim paths of the night
Set the shadow called God
In your skies to give light ;
But the morning of manhood is risen, and
the shadowless soul is in sight.

The tree many-rooted
That swells to the sky
With frondage red-fruited,
The life-tree am I :
In the buds of your lives is the sap of my
leaves : ye shall live and not die.

But the Gods of your fashion
That take and that give,
In their pity and passion
That scourge and forgive,
They are worms that are bred in the bark
that falls off : they shall die and not
live.

My own blood is what stanches
The wounds in my bark :
Stars caught in my branches
Make day of the dark,
And are worshipped as suns till the sunrise
shall tread out their fires as a spark.

Where dead ages hide under
The live roots of the tree,
In my darkness the thunder
Make utterance of me :
In the clash of my boughs with each other
ye hear the waves sound of the sea.

That noise is of Time,
As his feathers are spread
And his feet set to climb
Through the boughs overhead,
And my foliage rings round him and rustles,
and branches are bent with his tread.

The storm-winds of ages
Blow through me and cease,
The war-wind that rages,
The spring-wind of peace,
Ere the breath of them roughen my tresses,
ere one of my blossoms increase.

All sounds of all changes,
All shadows and lights
On the world's mountain-ranges
And stream-riven heights,
Whose tongue is the wind's tongue and lan-
guage of storm-clouds on earth-shaking
nights ;

All forms of all faces,
All works of all hands
In unsearchable places
Of time-stricken lands,
All death and all life, and all reigns and all
ruins, drop through me as sands.

Though sore be my burden
And more than ye know,
And my growth have no guerdon
But only to grow,
Yet I fail not of growing for lightnings
above me or deathworms below.

These too have their part in me,
As I too in these ;
Such fire is at heart in me,
Such sap is this tree's,
Which hath in it all sounds and all secrets
of infinite lands and of seas.

In the spring-colored hours
When my mind was as May's,
There brake forth of me flowers
By centuries of days,
Strong blossoms with perfume of manhood,
shot out from my spirit as rays.

And the sound of them springing
And smell of their shoots
Were as warmth and sweet singing
And strength to my roots ;
And the lives of my children made perfect
with freedom of soul were my fruits.

I bid you but be ;
I have need not of prayer ;
I have need of you free
As your mouths of mine air ;
That my heart may be greater within me,
beholding the fruits of me fair.

More fair than strange fruit is
Of faiths ye espouse ;
In me only the root is
That blooms in your boughs ;
Behold now your God that ye made you,
to feed him with faith of your vows.

In the darkening and whitening
Abysses adored,
With dayspring and lightning
For lamp and for sword,
God thunders in heaven, and his angels
are red with the wrath of the Lord. +

O my sons, O too dutiful
Toward Gods not of me,
Was not I enough beautiful ?
Was it hard to be free ?
For behold, I am with you, am in you and
of you ; look forth now and see.

Lo, winged with world's wonders,
With miracles shod,
With the fires of his thunders
For raiment and rod,
God trembles in heaven, and his angels are
white with the terror of God.

For his twilight is come on him,
His anguish is here ;
And his spirits gaze dumb on him,
Grown grey from his fear ;
And his hour taketh hold on him stricken,
the last of his infinite year.

Thought made him and breaks him,
Truth slays and forgives ;
But to you, as time takes him,
This new thing it gives,
Even love, the beloved Republic, that feeds
upon freedom and lives.

For truth only is living,
Truth only is whole,
And the love of his giving
Man's polestar and pole ;
Man, pulse of my centre, and fruit of my
body, and seed of my soul.

One birth of my bosom ;
One beam of mine eye :
One topmost blossom
That scales the sky ;
Man, equal and one with me, man that is
made of me, man that is I.

BEFORE A CRUCIFIX.

HERE, down between the dusty trees,
At this lank edge of haggard wood,
Women with labor-loosened knees,
With gaunt backs bowed by servitude,
Stop, shift their loads, and pray, and fare
Forth with souls easier for the prayer.

The suns have branded black, the rains
Striped grey this piteous God of theirs ;
The face is full of prayers and pains,
To which they bring their pains and
prayers ;
Lean limbs that shew the laboring bones,
And ghastly mouth that gapes and groans.

God of this grievous people, wrought
After the likeness of their race,
By faces like thine own besought,
Thine own blind helpless eyeless face,
I too, that have nor tongue nor knee
For prayer, I have a word to thee.

It was for this then, that thy speech
Was blown about the world in flame
And men's souls shot up out of reach
Of fear or lust or thwarting shame—
That thy faith over souls should pass
As sea-winds burning the grey grass ?

It was for this, that prayers like these
Should spend themselves about thy feet,
And with hard overlabored knees
Kneeling, these slaves of men should
beat

Bosoms too lean too suckle sons
And fruitless as their orisons ?

It was for this, that men should make
Thy name a fetter on men's necks,
Poor men's made poorer for thy sake,
And women's withered out of sex ?
It was for this, that slaves should be,
Thy word was passed to set men free ?

The nineteenth wave of the ages rolls
Now deathward since thy death and
birth.

Hast thou fed full men's starved-out souls ?
Hast thou brought freedom upon earth ?
Or are there less oppressions done
In this wild world under the sun ?

Nay, if indeed thou be not dead,
Before thy terrene shrine be shaken,
Look down, turn usward, bow thine head ;
O thou that wast of God forsaken,
Look on thine household here, and see
These that have not forsaken thee.

Thy faith is fire upon their lips,
Thy kingdom golden in their hands ;
They scourge us with thy words for whips,
They brand us with thy words for
brands ;

The thirst that made thy dry throat shrink
To their moist mouths commends the drink.

The toothèd thorns that bit thy brows
Lighten the weight of gold on theirs ;
Thy nakedness enrobes thy spouse
With the soft sanguine stuff she wears
Whose old limbs use for ointment yet
Thine agony and bloody sweat.

The blinding buffets on thine head
On their crowned heads confirm the
crown ;

Thy scourging dyes their raiment red,
And with thy bands they fasten down
For burial in the blood-bought field
The nations by thy stripes unhealed.

With iron for thy linen bands
And unclean cloths for winding-sheet

They bind the people's nail-pierced hands,
They hide the people's nail-pierced feet :
And what man or what angel known
Shall roll back the sepulchral stone ?

But these have not the rich man's grave
To sleep in when their pain is done.
These were not fit for God to save.
As naked hell-fire is the sun
In their eyes living, and when dead
These have not where to lay their head.

They have no tomb to dig, and hide ;
Earth is not theirs, that they should
sleep.

On all these tombless crucified
No lovers' eyes have time to weep.
So still, for all man's tears and creeds,
The sacred body hangs and bleeds.

Through the left hand a nail is driven,
Faith, and another through the right,
Forged in the fires of hell and heaven,
Fear that puts out the eye of light :
And the feet soiled and scarred and pale
Are pierced with falsehood for a nail.

And priests against the mouth divine
Push their sponge full of poison yet
And bitter blood for myrrh and wine,
And on the same reed is it set
Wherewith before they buffeted
The people's disanointed head.

O sacred head, O desecrate,
O labor-wounded feet and hands,
O blood poured forth in pledge to fate
Of nameless lives in divers lands,
O slain and spent and sacrificed
People, the grey-grown speechless Christ !

Is there a gospel in the red
Old witness of thy wide-mouthed wounds ?
From thy blind stricken tongueless head
What desolate evangel sounds
A hopeless note of hope deferred ?
What word, if there be any word ?

O son of man, beneath man's feet
Cast down, O common face of man
Whereon all blows and buffets meet,
O royal, O republican
Face of the people bruised and dumb
And longing till thy kingdom come !

The soldiers and the high priests part
 Thy vesture : all thy days are pierced,
 And all the nights that eat thine heart.
 And that one seamless coat of Christ,
 The freedom of the natural soul,
 They cast their lots for to keep whole.

No fragment of it save the name
 They leave thee for a crown of scorns
 Wherewith to mock thy naked shame
 And forehead bitten through with thorns
 And, marked with sanguine sweat and tears,
 The stripes of eighteen hundred years.

And we seek yet if God or man
 Can loosen thee as Lazarus,
 Bid thee rise up republican
 And save thyself and all of us ;
 But no disciple's tongue can say
 When thou shalt take our sins away.

And mouldering now and hoar with moss
 Between us and the sunlight swings
 The phantom of a Christless cross
 Shadowing the sheltered heads of kings
 And making with its moving shade
 The souls of harmless men afraid.

It creaks and rocks to left and right,
 Consumed of rottenness and rust,
 Worm-eaten of the worms of night,
 Dead as their spirits who put trust,
 Round its base muttering as they sit,
 In the time-cankered name of it.

Thou, in the day that breaks thy prison,
 People, though these men take thy name,
 And hail and hymn thee rearisen,
 Who made songs erewhile of thy shame,
 Give thou not ear ; for these are they
 Whose good day was thine evil day.

Set not thine hand unto their cross
 Give not thy soul up sacrificed.
 Change not the gold of faith for dross
 Of Christian creeds that spit on Christ.
 Let not thy tree of freedom be
 Regrafted from that rotting tree.

This dead God here against my face
 Hath help for no man ; who hath seen
 The good works of it, or such grace
 As thy grace in it, Nazarene,
 As that from thy live lips which ran
 For man's sake, O thou son of man ?

The tree of faith ingrafted by priests
 Puts its foul foliage out above thee,
 And round it feed man-eating beasts
 Because of whom we dare not love thee ;
 Though hearts reach back and memories
 ache,
 We cannot praise thee for their sake.

O hidden face of man, wherever
 The years have woven a viewless veil,
 If thou wast verily man's lover,
 What did thy love or blood avail ?
 Thy blood the priests make poison of,
 And in gold shekels coin thy love.

So when our souls look back to thee
 They sicken, seeing against thy side,
 Too foul to speak of or to see,
 The leprous likeness of a bride,
 Whose kissing lips through his lips grown
 Leave their God rotten to the bone.

When we would see thee man, and know
 What heart thou hadst toward men indeed,
 Lo, thy blood-blackened altars ; lo,
 The lips of priests that pray and feed
 While their own hell's worm curls and licks
 The poison of the crucifix.

Thou bad'st let children come to thee ;
 What children now but curses come ?
 What man in that God can be
 Who sees their worship, and is dumb ?
 No soul that lived, loved, wrought, and
 died,
 Is this their carrion crucified.

Nay, if their God and thou be one,
 If thou and this thing be the same,
 Thou shouldst not look upon the sun ;
 The sun grows haggard at thy name.
 Come down, be done with, cease, give o'er ;
 Hide thyself, strive not, be no more.

TENEBRÆ.

At the chill high tide of the night.

At the turn of the fluctuant hours,
When the waters of time are at height,
In a vision arose on my sight
The kingdoms of earth and the powers.

In a dream without lightening of eyes
I saw them, children of earth,
Nations and races arise,
Each one after his wise,
Signed with the sign of his birth.

Sound was none of their feet,
Light was none of their faces ;
In their lips breath was not, or heat,
But a subtle murmur and sweet
As of water in wan waste places.

Pale as from passionate years,
Years unassuaged of desire,
Sang they soft in mine ears,
Crowned with jewels of tears,
Girt with girdles of fire.

A slow song beaten and broken,
As is were from the dust and the dead,
As of spirits athirst unsloken,
As of things unspeakable spoken,
As of tears unendurable shed.

In the manifold sound remote,
In the molten murmur of song,
There was but a sharp sole note
Alive on the night and afloat,
The cry of the world's heart's wrong.

As the sea in the straight sea-caves,
The sound came straitened and strange ;
A noise of the rending of graves,
A tidal thunder of waves,
The music of death and of change.

"We have waited so long," they say.
"For a sound of the God, for a breath,
For a ripple of the refluence of day,
For the fresh bright wind of the fray,
For the light of the sunrise of death.

"We have prayed not, we, to be strong,
To fulfil the desire of our eyes ;
—Howbeit they have watched for it long,
Watched, and the night did them wrong,
Yet they say not of day shall it rise ?

"They are fearful and feeble with years,
Yet they doubt not of day if it be ;
Yea, blinded and beaten with tears,
Yea, sick with foresight of fears,
Yet a little, and hardly, they see.

"We pray not, we, for the palm,
For the fruit ingrafted of the fight,
For the blossom of peace and the balm,
And the tender triumph and calm
Of crownless and weaponless right.

"We pray not, we, to behold
The latter august new birth,
The young day's purple and gold,
And divine, and risen as of old,
The sun-god of Freedom on earth.

"Peace, and world's honor, and fame,
We have sought after none of these
things ;
The light of a life like flame
Passing the storm of a name —
Shaking the strongholds or kings :

"Nor, fashioned of fire and of air,
The splendor that burns on his head
Who was chiefest in ages that were,
Whose breath blew palaces bare,
Whose eye shone tyrannies dead ;

"All these things in your day
Ye shall see, O our sons, and shall hold
Surely ; but we, in the grey
Twilight, for one thing we pray,
In that day though our memories be cold :

"To feel on our brows as we wait
An air of the morning, a breath
From the springs of the east, from the gate
Whence freedom issues, and fate,
Sorrow, and triumph, and death :

"From a land whereon time hath not trod,
Where the spirit is bondless and bare,
And the world's rein breaks, and the rod,
And the soul of a man which is God,
He adores without altar or prayer :

"For alone of herself and her right
She takes, and alone gives grace :
And the colors of things lose light,
And the forms, in the limitless white
Splendor of space without space :

"And the blossom of man from his tomb
Yearns open, the flower that survives ;
And the shadows of changes consume
In the colorless passionate bloom
Of the live light made of our lives :

"Seeing each life given is a leaf
Of the manifold multiform flower,
And the least among these, and the chief.
As an ear in the red ripe sheaf
Stored for the harvesting hour.

"O spirit of man, most holy.
The measure of things and the root;
In our summers and winters a lowly
Seed, putting forth of them slowly
Thy supreme blossom and fruit ;

"In thy sacred and perfect year.
The souls that were parcel of thee
In the labor and life of us here
Shall be rays of thy sovereign sphere,
Springs of thy motion shall be.

"There is the fire that was man,
The light that was love, and the breath
That was hope ere deliverance began,

And the wind that was life for a span,
And the birth of new things which is
death.

"There, whosoever had light,
And, having, for men's sake gave ;
All that warred against night,
All that were found in the fight
Swift to be slain and to save ;

"Undisbranched of the storms that disroot
us

Of the lures that enthrall unenticed :
The names that exalt and transmute us :
The blood-bright splendour of Brutus,
The snow-bright splendor of Christ.

"There all chains are undone ;
Day there seems but as night ;
Spirit and sense are as one
In the light not of star nor of sun :
Liberty there is the light.

"She, sole mother and maker,
Stronger than sorrow, than strife ;
Deathless, though death overtake her ;
Faithful, though faith should forsake her ;
Spirit, and saviour, and life."

HYMN OF MAN.

(DURING THE SESSION IN ROME OF THE ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL.)

In the grey beginning of years, in the
twilight of things that began,
The word of the earth in the ears of the
world, was it God ? was it man ?
The word of the earth to the spheres her
sisters, the note of her song,
The sound of her speech in the ears of the
starry and sisterly throng,
Was it praise or passion or prayer, was it
love or devotion or dread,
When the veils of the shining air first wrapt
her jubilant head ?
When her eyes new-born of the night saw
yet no star out of reach ;
When her maiden mouth was alight with
the flame of musical speech ;
When her virgin feet were set on the terrible
heavenly way.
And her virginal lids were wet with the dew
of the birth of the day :
Eyes that had looked not on time, and ears
that had heard not of death ;

Lips that had learnt not the rhyme of change
and passionate breath,
The rhythmic anguish of growth, and the
motion of mutable things,
Of love that longs and is loth, and plume-
plucked hope without wings,
Passions and pains without number, and
life that runs and is lame,
From slumber again to slumber, the same
race set for the same,
Where the runners outwear each other, but
running with lampless hands
No man takes light from his brother till
blind at the goal he stands :
Ah, did they know, did they dream of it,
counting the cost and the worth ?
The ways of her days, did they seem then
good to the new-souled earth ?
Did her heart rejoice, and the might of her
spirit in her then,
Child yet no child of the night, and mother-
less mother of men ?

Was it Love brake forth flower-fashion, a
bird with gold on his wings,
Lovely, her firstborn passion, and impulse
of firstborn things?

Was Love that nestling indeed that under
the plumes of the night
Was hatched and hidden as seed in the
furrow, and brought forth bright?

Was it love lay shut in the shell world-
shaped, having over him there
Black world-wide wings that impel the
night through air?

And bursting her shell as a bird, night
shook through her sail-stretched vans,
And her heart as a water was stirred, and
its heat was the firstborn man's.

For the waste of the dead void air took
form of a world at birth,
And the waters and firmaments were, and
light, and the life-giving earth,
The beautiful bird unbegotten that night
brought forth without pain
In the fathomless years forgotten where-
over the dead gods reign,
Was it love, life, godhead, or fate? we say
the spirit is one

That moved on the dark to create out of
darkness the stars and the sun.

Before the growth was the grower, and the
seed ere the plant was sown;

Foot after foot ye go back and travail and
make yourselves mad:

Blind feet that feel for the track where high-
way there is none to be had.

Therefore the God that ye make you is
grievous and gives not aid,
Because it is but for your sake that the God
of your making is made.

Thou and I and he are not gods made men
for a span,

But God, if a God there be, is the sub-
stance of men which is man.

Our lives are as pulses or pores of his mani-
fold body and breath;

As waves of his sea on the shores where
birth is the beacon of death.

We men, the multiform features of man,
Whatsoever we be,
Recreate him of whom we are creatures,
and all we only are he.

Not each man of all men is God, but God
is the fruit of the whole;

Indivisible spirit and blood, indiscernible
body from soul.

Not men's but man's is the glory of god-
head the kingdom of time,
The mountainous ages made hoary with
snows for the spirit to climb.

A God with the world inwound whose clay
to his footstool clings;

A manifold God fast-bound as with iron of
adverse things.

A soul that labors and lives, an emotion, a
strenuous breath,
From the flame that its own mouth gives
reillumed and refreshed with death.

In the sea whereof centuries are waves the
live God plunges and swims;

His bed is in all men's graves, but the
worm hath not hold on his limbs.

Night puts out not his eyes, nor time sheds
change on his head;

With such fire as the stars of the skies are
the roots of his heart are fed.

Men are the thoughts passing through it,
the veins that fulfil it with blood,

With spirit of sense to renew it as springs
fulfilling a flood,

Men are the heartbeats of man, the plumes
that feather his wings,

Storm-worn, since being began, with the
wind and thunder of things,

Things are cruel and blind; their strength
detains and deforms:

And the wearying wings of the mind still
beat up the stream of their storms.

Still, as one swimming up stream, they
strike out blind in the blast,

In thunders of vision and dream, and light-
nings of future and past.

We are baffled and caught in the current
and bruised upon edges of shoals

As weeds or as reeds in the torrent of things
are the wind-shaken souls.

Spirit by spirit goes under, a foam-bell's
bubble of breath,

That blows and opens in sunder and blurs
not the mirror of death.

For a worm or a thorn in his path is a man's
soul quenched as a flame;

For his lust of an hour or his wrath shall
the worm and the man be the same.

O God sore stricken of things! they have
wrought him a raiment of pain;

Can a God shut eyelids and wings at a touch
on the nerves of the brain?

O shamed and sorrowful God, whose force
goes out at a blow!

What world shall shake at his nod ? at his
 coming what wilderness glow ?
 What help in the work of his hands ? what
 light in the track of his feet ?
 His days are snowflakes or sands, with cold
 to consume him and heat.
 He is servant with Change for lord, and for
 wages he hath to his hire
 Folly and force, and a sword that devours,
 and a ravening fire,
 From the bed of his birth to his grave he is
 driven as a wind at their will ;
 Lest Change bow down as his slave, and
 the storm and the sword be still ;
 Lest earth spread open her wings to the
 sunward, and sing with the spheres ;
 Lest man be master of things, to prevail on
 their forces and fears.
 By the spirit are things overcome ; they are
 stark, and 'the spirit hath breath ;
 It hath speech, and their forces are dumb ;
 it is living and things are of death.
 But they know not the spirit for master
 they feel not force from above,
 While man makes love to disaster, and
 woos desolation with love.
 Yea, himself too hath made himself chains,
 and his own hands plucked out his
 eyes ;
 For his own soul only constrains him, his
 own mouth only denies.
 The herds of kings and their hosts and the
 flocks of the high priests bow
 To a master whose face is a ghost's ; O
 thou that wast God, is it thou ?
 Thou madest man in the garden ; thou
 temptedst man, and he fell ;
 Thou gavest him poison and pardon for
 blood and burnt-offering to sell.
 Thou hast sealed thine elect to salvation,
 fast locked with faith for the key ;
 Make now for thyself expiation, and be
 thine atonement for thee.
 Ah, thou that darkenest heaven—ah, thou
 that bringest a sword—
 By the crimes of thine hands unforgiven
 they beseech thee to hear them, O
 Lord.
 By the balefires of ages that burn for thine
 incense, by creed and by rood,
 By the famine and passion that yearn and
 that hunger to find of thee food,
 By the children that asked at thy throne of
 the priests that were fat with thine hire
 For bread, and thou gavest a stone ; for
 light, and thou madest them fire ;
 By the kiss of thy peace like a snake's kiss,
 that leaves the soul rotten at root ;
 By the savors of gibbets and stakes thou
 hast planted to bear to thee fruit ;
 By torture and terror and treason, that
 make to thee weapons and wings ;
 By thy power upon men for a season, made
 out of the malice of things ;
 O thou that hast built thee a shrine of thee
 madness of man and his shame,
 And hast hung in the midst for a sign of his
 worship the lamp of thy name ;
 That hast shown him for heaven in a vision
 a void world's shadow and shell,
 And hast fed thy delight and derision with
 fire of belief as of hell ;
 That has fleshed on the souls that believe
 thee the fang of the death-worm fear,
 With anguish of dreams to deceive them
 whose faith cries out in thine ear ;
 By the face of the spirit confounded before
 thee and humbled in dust,
 By the dread wherewith life was astounded
 and shamed out of sense of its trust,
 By the scourges of doubt and repentance
 that fell on the soul at thy nod,
 Thou art judged, O judge, and the sentence
 is gone forth against thee, O God.
 Thy slave that slept is awake ; thy slave
 but slept for a span ;
 Yea, man thy slave shall unmake thee, who
 made thee lord over man.
 For his face is set to the east, his feet on
 the past and its dead ;
 The sun rearsen is his priest, and the heat
 thereof hallows his head.
 His eyes take part in the morning ; his
 spirit outsoundeth the sea
 Asks no more witness or warning from
 temple or tripod or tree.
 He hath set the centuries at union ; the
 night is afraid at his name ;
 Equal with life, in communion with death,
 he hath found them the same.
 Past the wall unsurmounted that bars out
 our vision with iron and fire
 He hath sent forth his soul for the stars to
 comply with and suns to conspire.
 His thought takes flight for the centre
 wherethrough it hath part in the whole ;
 The abysses forbid it not enter : the stars
 make room for the soul.
 Space is the soul's to inherit ; the night is
 hers as the day ;
 Lo, saith man, this is my spirit ; how shall
 not the worlds make way ?

Space is thought's, and the wonders thereof, and the secret of space ;

Is thought not more than the thunders and lightnings ? shall thought give place ?

Is the body not more than the vesture, the life not more than the meat ?

The will than the word or the gesture, the heart than the hands or the feet ?

Is the tongue not more than the speech is ? the head not more than the crown ?

And if higher than is heaven be the reach of the soul, shall not heaven bow down ?

Time, father of life, and more great than than the life it begat and began,

Earth's keeper and heaven's and their fate, lives, thinks, and hath substance in man.

Time's motion that throbs in his blood is the thought that gives heart to the skies,

And the springs of the fire that is food to the sunbeams are light to his eyes.

The minutes that beat with his heart are the words to which worlds keep chime,

And the thought in his pulses is part of the blood and the spirit of time.

He saith to the ages, Give ; and his soul foregoes not her share ;

Who are ye that forbid him to live, and would feed him with heavenlier air ?

Will ye feed him with poisonous dust, and restore him with hemlock for drink,

Till he yield you his soul up in trust, and have heart not to know or to think ?

He hath stirred him, and found out the flaw in his fetters, and cast them behind ;

His soul to his soul is a law, and his mind is a light to his mind.

The seal of his knowledge is sure, the truth and his spirit are wed ;

Men perish, but man shall endure ; lives die, but the life is not dead.

He hath sight of the secrets of season, the roots of the years and the fruits ;

His soul is at one with the reason of things that is sap to the roots.

He can hear in their changes a sound as the conscience of consonant spheres ;

He can see through the years flowing round him the law lying under the years.

Who are ye that would bind him with curses and blind him with vapor of prayer ?

Your might is as night that disperses when light is alive in the air.

The bow of your godhead is broken, the arm of your conquest is stayed ;

Though ye call down God to bear token, for fear of you none is afraid.

Will ye turn back times, and the courses of stars, and the season of souls ?

Shall God's breath dry up the sources that feed time full as it rolls ?

Nay, cry on him then till he show you a sign, till he lift up a rod ;

Hath he made not the nations to know him of old if indeed he be God ?

Is no heat of him left in the ashes of thousands burnt up for his sake ?

Can prayer not rekindle the flashes that shone in his face from the stake ?

Cry aloud ; for your God is a God and a Saviour ; cry, make yourselves lean ;

Is he drunk or asleep, that the rod of his wrath is unfelt and unseen ?

Is the fire of his old loving-kindness gone out, that his pyres are cold ?

Hath he gazed on himself unto blindness, who made men blind to behold ?

Cry out, for his kingdom is shaken ; cry out, for the people blaspheme ;

Cry aloud till his godhead awaken ; what doth he to sleep and to dream ?

Cry, cut yourselves, gash you with knives and with scourges, heap on to you dust ;

Is his life but as other gods' lives ? is not this the Lord God of your trust ?

Is not this the great God of your sires, that with souls and with bodies was fed,

And the world was on flame with his fires ? O fools, he was God, and is dead.

He will hear not again the strong crying of earth in his ears as before,

And the fume of his multitudes dying shall flatter his nostrils no more.

By the spirit he ruled as his slave is he slain who was mighty to slay,

And the stone that is sealed on his grave he shall rise not and roll not away.

Yea, weep to him, lift up your hands ; be your eyes as a fountain of tears ;

Where he stood there is nothing that stands ; if he call, there is no man that hears.

He hath doffed his king's raiment of lies now the wane of his kingdom is come ;

Ears hath he, and hears not ; and eyes, and he sees not ; and mouth, and is dumb.

His red king's raiment is ripped from him naked, his staff broken down ;

And the signs of his empire are stripped from him shuddering ; and where is his crown ?

And in vain by the wellsprings refrozen ye cry for the warmth of his sun—

O God, the Lord God of thy chosen, thy
will in thy kingdom be done.
Kingdom and will hath he none in him left
him, nor warmth in his breath ;
Till his corpse be cast out of the sun will ye
know not the truth of his death ?
Surely, ye say, he is strong, though the
times be against him and men ;
Yet a little, ye say, and how long, till he
come to show judgment again ?
Shall God then die as the beasts die ? who
is it hath broken his rod ?
O God, Lord God of thy priests, rise up
now and show thyself God.

They cry out, thine elect, thine aspirants
to heavenward, whose faith is as flame ;
O thou the Lord God of our tyrants, they
call thee, their God, by thy name.
By thy name that in hell-fire was written,
and burned at the point of thy sword,
Thou art smitten, thou God, thou art smit-
ten ; thy death is upon thee, O Lord.
And the love-song of earth as thou diest
resounds through the wind of her
wings—
Glory to Man in the highest ! for Man is
master of things.

THE PILGRIMS.

WHO is your lady of love, O ye that pass
Singing ? and is it for sorrow of that which
was
That ye sing sadly, or dream of what
shall be ?
For gladly at once and sadly it seems
ye sing.
—Our lady of love by you is unbeholden ;
For hands she hath none, nor eyes, nor lips,
nor golden
Treasure of hair, nor face nor form ; but
we
That love, we know her more fair
than anything.

—Is she a queen, having great gifts to
give ?
—Yea, these ; that whoso hath seen her
shall not live
Except he serve her sorrowing, with
strange pain,
Travail and bloodshedding and bitterer
tears ;
And when she bids die he shall surely die.
And he shall leave all things under the sky
And go forth naked under sun and rain
And work and wait and watch out all
his years.

—Hath she on earth no place of habitation ?
—Age to age calling, nation answering
nation,
Cries out, Where is she ? and there is
none to say ;
For if she be not in the spirit of men.

For if in the inward soul she hath no
place,
In vain they cry unto her, seeking her face,
In vain their mouths make much of her ;
for they
Cry with vain tongues, till the heart
lives again.

—O ye that follow, and have ye no repen-
tance ?
For on your brows is written a mortal
sentence,
An hieroglyph of sorrow, a fiery sign,
That in your lives ye shall not pause
or rest,
Nor have the sure sweet common love, nor
keep
Friends and safe days, nor joy of life nor
sleep.

—These have we not, who have one
thing, the divine
Face and clear eyes of faith and fruit-
ful breast.

—And ye shall die before your thrones be
won.
—Yea, and the changed world and the
liberal sun
Shall move and shine without us, and
we lie
Dead ; but if she too move on earth
and live,
But if the old world with all the old irons
rent

Laugh and give thanks, shall we be not content?

Nay, we shall rather live, we shall not die,

Life being so little and death so good to give.

And these men shall forget you—Yea, but we

Shall be a part of the earth and the ancient sea,

And heaven high air august, and awful fire,

And all things good; and no man's heart shall beat

But somewhat in it of our blood once shed
Shall quiver and quicken, as now in us the dead

Blood of men slain and the old same life's desire

Plants in their fiery footprints our fresh feet.

But ye that might be clothed with all things pleasant,

Ye are foolish that put off the fair soft present,

That clothe yourselves with the cold future air;

When mother and father and tender sister and brother

And the old live love that was shall be as ye,

Dust, and no fruit of loving life shall be.

—She shall be yet who is more than all these were,

Than sister or wife or father unto us or mother.

—Is this worth life, is this, to win for wages?

Lo, the dead mouths of the awful grey grown ages,

The venerable, in the past that is their prison,

In the outer darkness, in the unopening grave,

Laugh, knowing how many as ye now say have said,

How many, and all are fallen, are fallen and dead:

Shall ye dead rise, and these dead have not risen;

—Not we but she, who is tender and swift to save.

—Are ye not weary and faint not by the way

Seeing night! by night devoured of day by day,

Seeing hour by hour consumed in sleepless fire?

Sleepless: and ye too, when shall ye too sleep?

—We are weary in heart and head, in hands and feet,

And surely more than all things sleep were sweet,

Than all things save the inexorable desire
Which whoso knoweth shall neither faint nor weep.

—Is this so sweet that one were fain to follow?

Is this so sure where all men's hopes are hollow,

Even this your dream, that by much tribulation

Ye shall make whole flawed hearts, and bowed necks straight?

—Nay though our life were blind, our death were fruitless,

Not therefore were the whole world's high hope rootless;

But man to man, nation would turn to nation,

And the old life live, and the old great world be great.

—Pass on then and pass by us and let us be,
For what light think ye after life to see?

And if the world fare better will ye know?

And if man triumph who shall seek you and say?

—Enough of light is this for one life's span,
That all men born are mortal, but not man:

And we men bring death lives by night to sow,

That man may reap and eat and live by day

ARMAND BARBÈS.

I.

FIRE out of heaven, a flower of perfect
 fire,
 That where the roots of life are hid its
 root
 And where the fruits of time are brought
 forth fruit ;
 A faith made flesh, a visible desir
 That heard the yet unbreathing y re-
 spire,
 And speech break forth of centuries that
 sit mute
 Beyond all feeble footprint of pursuit ;
 That touched the highest of hope and went
 up higher :
 A heart love-wounded whereto love was
 law,
 A soul reproachless without fear or flaw.
 A shining spirit without shadow of shame,
 A memory made of all men's love and
 awe :
 Being disembodied, so thou be the same,
 What need, O soul, to sign thee with thy
 name ?

II.

All woes of all men sat upon thy soul
 And all their wrongs were heavy on thy
 head ;
 With all their wounds thy heart was
 pierced and bled.
 And in thy spirit as in a mourning scroll
 The world's huge sorrows were inscribed
 by roll,
 All theirs on earth who serve and faint
 for bread,
 All banished men's, all theirs in prison
 dead,
 Thy love had heart and sword-hand for the
 whole.
 "This was my day of glory," didst thou say,
 When, by the scaffold thou hadst hope to
 climb
 For thy faith's sake they brought thee re-
 spite ; " Nay,
 I shall not die then, I have missed my day."
 O hero, O our help, O head sublime,
 Thy day shall be commensurate with
 time.

QUIA MULTUM AMAVIT.

AM I not he that hath made thee and be-
 gotten thee,
 I, God, the spirit of man ?
 Wherefore now these eighteen years hast
 thou forgotten me,
 From whom thy life began ?
 Thy life-blood and thy life-breath and thy
 beauty,
 Thy might of hands and feet,
 Thy soul made strong for divinity of duty
 And service which was sweet.
 Through the red sea brimmed with blood
 didst thou not follow me,
 As one that walks in trance ?
 Was the storm strong to break or the sea
 to swallow thee,
 When thou wast free and France ?
 I am Freedom, God and man, O France,
 that plead with thee ;
 How long now shall I plead ?

Was I not with thee in travail, and in need
 with thee,
 Thy sore travail and need ?
 Thou wast fairest and first of my virgin-
 vested daughters,
 Fairest and foremost thou ;
 And thy breast was white, though thy hands
 were red with slaughters,
 Thy breast, a harlot's now.
 O foolish virgin and fair among the fallen,
 A ruin where satyrs dance,
 A garden wasted for beasts to crawl and
 brawl in,
 What hast thou done with France ?
 Where is she who bared her bosom but to
 thunder,
 Her brow to storm and flame,
 And before her face was the red sea cloven
 in sunder,
 And all its waves made tame ?

And the surf wherein the broad-based rocks
 were shaking
 She saw far off divide,
 At the blast of the breath of the battle
 blown and breaking,
 And weight of wind and tide ;
 And the ravin and the ruin of throned
 nations
 And every royal race.
 And the kingdoms and kings from the state
 of their high stations
 That fell before her face.
 Yea, great was the fall of them, all that rose
 against her.
 From the earth's old-historied
 heights ;
 For my hands were fire, and my wings as
 walls that fenced her,
 Mine eyes as pilot-lights.
 Not as guerdons given of kings the gifts I
 brought her,
 Not strengths that pass away ;
 But my heart, my breath of life, O France,
 O daughter,
 I gave thee in that day,
 Yea, the heart's blood of a very God I gave
 thee,
 Breathed in thy mouth his breath ;
 Was my word as a man's having no more
 strength to save thee
 From this worse thing than death ?
 Didst thou dream of it only, the day that I
 stood nigh thee,
 Was all its light a dream ?
 When that iron surf roared backwards and
 went by thee
 Unscathed of storm or stream :
 When thy sons rose up and thy young men
 stood together,
 One equal face of fight,
 And my flag swam high as the swimming
 sea-foam's feather.
 Laughing, a lamp so light ?
 Ah the lordly laughter and light of it, that
 lightened
 Heaven-high, the heaven's whole
 length !
 Ah the hearts of heroes pierced, the bright
 lips whitened
 Of strong men in their strength !
 Ah the banner-poles, the stretch of straight-
 ening streamers
 Straining their full reach out !
 Ah the men's hands making true the dreams
 of dreamers,
 The hopes brought forth in doubt !

Ah the noise of horse, the charge and thun-
 der of drumming,
 And swaying and sweep of swords !
 Ah the light that led them through of the
 world's life coming,
 Clear of its lies and lords !
 By the lightning of the lips of guns whose
 flashes
 Made plain the strayed world's way ;
 By the flame that left her dead old sins in
 ashes,
 Swept out of sight of day ;
 By thy children whose bare feet were shod
 with thunder,
 Their bare hands mailed with fire :
 By the faith that went with them, waking
 fear and wonder.
 Heart's love and high desire ;
 By the tumult of the waves of nations wak-
 ing
 Blind in the loud wide night ;
 By the wind that went on the world's waste
 waters, making
 Their marble darkness white,
 As the flash of the flakes of the foam flared
 lamplike, leaping
 From wave to gladdening wave,
 Making wide the fast-shut eyes of thraldom
 sleeping
 The sleep of the unclean grave ;
 By the fire of equality, terrible, devouring,
 Divine, that brought forth good ;
 By the lands it purged and wasted and left
 flowering
 With bloom of brotherhood ;
 By the lips of fraternity that for love's sake
 uttered
 Fierce words and fires of death,
 But the eyes were deep as love's and the
 fierce lips fluttered
 With love's own living breath ;
 By the weaponed hands, brows helmed, and
 bare feet spurning
 The bared head of a king ;
 By the storm of sunrise round thee risen and
 burning,
 Why hast thou done this thing ?
 Thou hast mixed thy limbs with the son of
 a harlot a stranger
 Mouth to mouth limb to limb,
 Thou, bride of a God, because of the brides-
 man Danger,
 To bring forth seed to him.
 For thou thoughtest only, the terrible bride-
 groom wakes me,
 When I would sleep to go ;

The fire of his mouth consumes, and the red
 kiss shakes me,
 More bitter than a blow.
 Rise up, my beloved, go forth to meet the
 stranger,
 Put forth thine arm, he saith :
 Fear thou not at all though the bridesman
 should be Danger,
 The bridesmaid should be Death.
 I the bridegroom, am I not with thee, O
 bridal nation
 O wedded France to strive ?
 To destroy the sins of the earth with divine
 devastation,
 Till none be left alive ?
 Lo her growths of sons, foliage of men and
 frondage,
 Broad boughs of the old-world tree
 With iron of shame and with pruning-hooks
 of bondage
 They are shorn from sea to sea.
 Lo, I set wings to thy feet that have been
 wingless,
 Till the utter race be run ;
 Till the priestless temples cry to the thrones
 made kingless,
 Are we not also undone ?
 Till the immeasurable Republic arise and
 enlighten
 Above these quick and dead,
 And her awful robes be changed and her
 red robes whiten,
 Her warring-robes of red
 But thou wouldst not, saying, I am weary
 and faint to follow,
 Let me lie down and rest ;
 And hast sought out shame to sleep with,
 mire to wallow,

Yea, a much fouler breast :
 And thine own hast made prostitute, sold
 and shamed and bared it,
 Thy bosom which was mine,
 And the bread of the world I gave thee
 hast soiled, and shared it
 Among these snakes and swine.
 As a harlot thou wast handled and polluted.
 Thy faith held light as foam,
 That thou sentest men thy sons, thy sons
 imbruted,
 To slay thine elder Rome.
 Therefore, O harlot, I gave thee to the
 accurst one,
 By night to be defiled,
 To thy second shame, and a fouler than
 the first one,
 That got thee first with child.
 Yet I know thee turning back now to be-
 hold me,
 To bow thee and make thee bare,
 Not for sin's sake but penitence, by my feet
 to hold me,
 And wipe them with thine hair.
 And sweet ointment of thy grief thou hast
 brought thy master,
 And set before thy lord,
 From a box of flawed and broken alabaster,
 Thy broken spirit, poured.
 And love-offerings, tears and perfumes,
 hast thou given me,
 To reach my feet and touch ;
 Therefore thy sins, which are many, are
 forgiven thee,
 Because thou hast loved much.

18 brumaire, an 78.

GENESIS.

In the outer world that was before this
 earth,
 That was before all shape or space was
 born,
 Before the blind first hour of time had
 birth,
 Before night knew the moonlight or the
 morn ;
 Yea, before any world had any light,
 Or anything called God or man drew
 breath,

Slowly the strong sides of the heaving
 night
 Moved, and brought forth the strength
 of life and death.

And the sad shapeless horror increate
 That was all things and one thing, with
 out fruit,
 Limit, or law ; where love was none, nor
 hate,
 Where no leaf came to blossom from no
 root ;

The very darkness that time knew not of,
 Nor God laid hand on, nor was man
 found there,
 Ceased, and was cloven in several shapes ;
 above
 Light, and night under, and fire, earth,
 water, and air.

Sunbeams and starbeams, and all colored
 things,
 All forms and all similitudes began ;
 And death, the shadow cast by life's wide
 wings,
 And God, the shade cast by the soul of
 man.

Then between shadow and substance, night
 and light,
 Then between birth and death, and deeds
 and days
 The illimitable embrace and the amorous
 fight
 That of itself begets, bears, rears, and
 slays,

The immortal war of mortal things, that is
 Labor and life and growth and good and
 ill,
 The mild antiphonies that melt and kiss,
 The violent symphonies that meet and
 kill,

All nature of all things began to be.
 But chiefiest in the spirit (beast or man,
 Planet of heaven or blossom of earth or sea)
 The divine contraries of life began.

For the great labor of growth, being many,
 is one ;
 One thing the white death and the ruddy
 birth ;
 The invisible air and the all-beholden sun,
 And barren water and many-childed earth.

And these things are made manifest in men
 From the beginning forth unto this day :

Time writes and life records them, and again
 Death seals them lest the record pass
 away.

For if death were not, then should growth
 not be,
 Change, nor the life of good nor evil things ;
 Nor were there night at all nor light to see,
 Nor water of sweet nor water of bitter
 springs.

For in each man and each year that is born
 Are sown the twin seeds of the strong
 twin powers ;
 The white seed of the fruitful helpful morn,
 The black seed of the barren hurtful
 hours.

And he that of the black seed eateth fruit,
 To him the savor as honey shall be sweet ;
 And he in whom the white seed hath struck
 root,
 He shall have sorrow and trouble and
 tears for meat.

And him whose lips the sweet fruit hath
 made red
 In the end men loathe and make his
 name a rod ;
 And him whose mouth on the unsweet fruit
 hath fed
 In the end men follow and know for very
 God.

And of these twain, the black seed and the
 white,
 All things come forth endured of men and
 done ;
 And still the day is great with child of night,
 And still the black night labors with the
 sun.

And each man and each year that lives on
 earth
 Turns hither or thither, and hence or
 thence is fed ;
 And as a man before was from his birth,
 So shall a man be after among the dead.

TO WALT WHITMAN IN AMERICA.

SEND but a song oversea for us.
 Heart of their hearts who are free,
 Heart of their singer, to be for us
 More than our singing can be ;
 Ours, in the tempest at error,
 With no light but the twilight of terror ;
 Send us a song oversea !

Sweet-smelling of pine-leaves and grasses,
 And blown as a tree through and through
 With the winds of thee keen mountain-
 passes,
 And tender as sun-smitten dew ;
 Sharp-tongued as the winter that shakes
 The wastes of your limitless lakes,
 Wide-eyed as the sea-line's blue.

O strong-winged soul with prophetic
 Lips hot with the bloodbeats of song
 With tremor of heartstrings magnetic,
 With thoughts as thunders in throng,
 With consonant ardors of chords
 That pierce men's souls as with swords
 And hale them hearing along,

Make us too music, to be with us
 As a word from a world's heart warm,
 To sail the dark as a sea with us,
 Full-sailed, outsing the storm,
 A song to put fire in our ears
 Whose burning shall burn up tears,
 Whose sign bid battle reform ;

A note in the ranks of a clarion,
 A word in the wind of cheer,
 To consume as with lightning the carrion
 That makes time foul for us here ;
 In the air that our dead things infest
 A blast of the breath of the west,
 Till east way as west way is clear.

Out of the sun beyond sunset,
 From the evening whence morning shall
 be,
 With the rollers in measureless onset,
 With the van of the storming sea,
 With the world-wide wind, with the breath
 That breaks ships driven upon death,
 With the passion of all things free,

With the sea-steeds footless and frantic,
 White myriads for death to bestride
 In the charge of the ruining Atlantic
 Where deaths by regiments ride,
 With clouds and clamors of waters,
 With a long note shriller than slaughter's
 On the furrowless fields world-wide,

With terror, with ardor and wonder,
 With the soul of the season that wakes
 When the weight of a whole year's thunder
 In the tidestream of autumn breaks,
 Let the flight of the wide-winged word
 Come over, come in and be heard,
 Take form and fire for our sakes.

For a continent bloodless with travail
 Here toils and brawls as it can,
 And the web of it who shall unravel
 Of all that peer on the plan ;
 Would fain grow men, but they grow not,
 And fain be free, but they know not
 One name for freedom and man ?

One name, not twain for division ;
 One thing, not twain, from the birth ;
 Spirit and substance and vision,
 Our life more than worship is worth ;
 Unbeheld, unadored, undivined,
 The cause, the centre, the mind,
 The secret and sense of the earth.

Here as a weakling in irons,
 Here as a weanling in bands
 As a prey that the stake-net environs,
 Our life that we looked for stands ;
 And the man-child naked and dear,
 Democracy, turns on us here
 Eyes trembling with tremulous hands.

It sees not what season shall bring to it
 Sweet fruit of its bitter desire ;
 Few voices it hears yet sing to it,
 Few pulses of hearts respire ;
 Foresees not time, nor forehears
 The noises of imminent years,
 Earthquake, and thunder, and fire :

When crowned and weaponed and curbless

It shall walk without helm or shield

The bare burnt furrows and herbless

Of wars last flame-stricken field,

Till godlike, equal with time,

It stand in the sun sublime,

In the godhead of man revealed.

Round your people and over them

Light like raiment is drawn,

Close as a garment to cover them

Wrought not of mail nor of lawn :

Here, with hope hardly to wear,

Naked nations and bare

Swim, sink, strike out for the dawn.

Chains are here, and a prison,

Kings, and subjects, and shame :

If the God upon you be arisen.

How should our songs be the same ?

How in confusion of change,

How shall we sing, in a strange

Land songs praising his name ?

God is buried and dead to us

Even the spirit of earth.

Freedom : so have they said to us,

Some with mocking and mirth,

Some with heartbreak and tears :

And a God without eyes, without ears

Who shall sing of him dead in the birth ?

The earth god Freedom, the lonely

Face lightening, the footprint unshod.

Not as one man crucified only

Nor scoured with but one life's rod :

The soul that is substance or nations,

Reincarnate with fresh generations ;

The great god Man, which is God.

But in weariest of years and obscurest

Doth it live not at heart of all things

The one God and one spirit, a purest

Life, fed from unstanchable springs :

Within love ; within hatred it is,

And its seed in the stripe as the kiss,

And in slaves is the germ, and in kings.

Freedom we call it, for holier

Name of the soul's there is none ;

Surelier it labors, if slower,

Than the metres of star or of sun

Slower than life unto breath

Surelier than time unto death,

It moves till its labor be done.

Till the motion be done and the measure

Circling through season and clime.

Slumber and sorrow and pleasure,

Vision of virtue and crime ;

Till consummate with conquering eyes,

A soul disembodied, it rise

From the body transfigured of time.

Till it rise and remain and take station

With the stars of the world that rejoice ;

Till the voice of its heart's exultation

Be as theirs an invariable voice

By no discord of evil estranged,

By no pause by no breach in it changed

By no clash in the chord of its choice.

It is one with the world's generations,

With the spirit the star and the sod :

With the kingless and king-stricken nation,

With the cross, and the chain, and the rod

The most high, the most secret, most lonely,

The earth-soul Freedom, that only

Lives, and that only is God

CHRISTMAS ANTIPHONES

I

IN CHURCH

THOU whose birth on earth

Angels sang to men,

While thy stars made mirth,

Saviour, at thy birth.

This day born again ;

As this night was bright

With thy cradle-ray,

Very light of light,

Turn the wild world's night

To thy perfect day.

God whose feet made sweet

Those wild ways they trod,

From thy fragrant feet

Staining field and street

With the blood of God ;

God whose breast is rest

In the time of strife,

In thy secret breast
Sheltering souls oppress
From the heat of life ;

God whose eyes are skies
Love-lit as with spheres
By the lights that rise
To thy watching eyes,
Orbed lights of tears ;

God whose heart hath part
In all grief that is,
Was no man's the dart
That went through thine heart,
And the wound not his ?

Where the pale souls wail,
Held in the bonds of death,
Where all spirits quail,
Came thy Godhead pale
Still from human breath—

Pale from life and strife,
Wan with manhood, came
Forth of mortal life,
Pierced as with a knife,
Scarred as with a flame.

Thou the Word and Lord
In all time and space
Heard, beheld, adored,
With all ages poured
Forth before thy face,

Lord, what worth in earth
Drew thee down to die ?
What therein was worth,
Lord, thy death and birth ?
What beneath thy sky ?

Light above all love
By thy love was lit,
And brought down the Dove
Feathered from above
With the wings of it.

From the height of night,
Was not thine the star
That led forth with might
By no wordly light
Wise men from afar ?

Yet the wise men's eyes
Saw thee not more clear

Than they saw thee rise
Who in shepherd's guise
Drew as poor men near.

Yet thy poor endure,
And are with us yet,
Be thy name a sure
Refuge for thy poor
Whom men's eyes forget.

Thou whose ways we praise,
Clear alike and dark,
Keep our works and ways
This and all thy days
Safe inside thine ark.

Who shall keep thy sheep,
Lord, and lose not one ?
Who save one shall keep,
Lest the shepherds sleep ?
Who beside the Son ?

From the grave-deep wave,
From the sword and flame,
Thou, even thou, shalt save
Souls of king and slave
Only by thy Name.

Light not born with morn
Or her fires above,
Jesus virgin-born,
Held of men in scorn,
Turn their scorn to love.

Thou whose face gives grace
As the sun's doth heat,
Let thy sunbright face
Lighten time and space
Here beneath thy feet.

Bid our peace increase,
Thou that madest morn ;
Bid oppressions cease ;
Bid the night be peace ;
Bid the day be born.

II.

OUTSIDE CHURCH.

We whose days and ways
All the night makes dark,
What day shall we praise
Of these weary days
That our life-drops mark ?

We whose mind is blind,
Fed with hope of nought ;
Wastes of worn mankind,
Without heart or mind,
Without meat or thought ;

We with strife of life
Worn till all life cease,
Want, a whetted knife,
Sharpening strife on strife,
How should we love peace ?

Ye whose meat is sweet
And your wine-cup red,
Us beneath your feet
Hunger grinds as wheat,
Grinds to make you bread.

Ye whose night is bright
With soft rest and heat,
Clothed like day with light,
Us the naked night
Slays from street to street.

Hath your God no rod,
That ye tread so light ?
Man on us as God,
God as man hath trod,
Trod us down with might.

We that one by one
Bleed from either's rod,
What for us hath done
Man beneath the sun,
What for us hath God ?

We whose blood is food
Given your wealth to feed,
From the Christless rood
Red with no God's blood,
But with man's indeed ;

How shall we that see
Night-long overhead
Life, the flowerless tree,
Nailed whereon as we
Were our fathers dead—

We whose ear can hear,
Not whose tongue can name.
Famine, ignorance, fear.
Bleeding tear by tear
Year by year of shame,

Till the dry life die
Out of bloodless breast.

Out of beamless eye,
Out of mouths that cry
Till death feed with rest—

How shall we as ye,
Though ye bid us, pray ?
Though ye call, can we
Hear you call, or see,
Though ye show us day ?

We whose name is shame,
We whose souls walk bare,
Shall we call the same
God as ye by name,
Teach our lips your prayer ?

God, forgive and give,
For His sake who died ?
Nay, for ours who live,
How shall we forgive
Thee, then, on our side ?

We whose right to light
Whom the blind beams smite
Heaven's high noon denies,
That for you shine bright,
And but burn our eyes,

With what dreams of beams
Shall we build up day,
At what sourceless streams
Seek to drink in dreams
Ere they pass away ?

In what street shall meet,
At what market-place,
Your feet and our feet,
With one goal to greet,
Having run one race ?

What one hope shall ope
For us all as one
One some horoscope,
Where the soul sees hope
That outburns the sun ?

At what shrine what wine,
At what board what bread,
Salt as blood or brine,
Shall we share in sign
How we poor were fed ?

In what hour what power
Shall we pray for morn,
If your perfect hour,
When all day bears flower,
Not for us is born ?

III.

BEYOND CHURCH.

YE that weep in sleep,
Souls and bodies bound,
Ye that all night keep
Watch for change, and weep
That no change is found ;

Ye that cry and die,
And the world goes on
iWthout ear or eye,
And the days go by
Till all days are gone ;

Man shall do for you,
Men the sons of man,
What no God would do
That they sought unto
While the blind years ran.

Brotherhood of good,
Equal laws and rights,
Freedom, whose sweet food
Feeds the multitude
All their days and nights,

With the bread full-fed
Of her body blest
And the soul's wine shed
From her table spread
Where the world is guest,

Mingling me and thee,
When like light of eyes
Flashed through thee and me
Truth shall make us free,
Liberty make wise ;

These are they whom day
Follows and gives light
Whence they see to slay,
Night, and burn away
All the seed of night.

What of thine and mine,
What of want and wealth,
When one faith is wine
For my heart and thine
And one draught is health?

For no sect elect
Is the soul's wine poured
And her table decked ;
Whom should man reject
From man's common board ?

Gods refuse and choose ;
Grudge and sell and spare ;
None shall man refuse,
None of all men lose,
None leave out of care.

No man's might of sight
Knows that hour before ;
No man's hand hath might
To put back that light
For one hour the more.

Not though all men call,
Kneeling with void hands,
Shall they see light fall
Till it come for all
Tribes of men and lands.

No desire brings fire
Down from heaven by prayer,
Though man's vain desire
Hang faith's wind struck lyre
Out in tuneless air

One hath breath and saith
What the tune shall be—
Time, who puts his breath
Into life and death,
Into earth and sea.

To and fro years flow
Fill their tides and ebb,
As his fingers go
Weaving to and fro
One unfinished web.

All the range of change
Hath its bounds therein,
All the lives that range
All the byways strange
Named of death or sin.

Star from far to star
Speaks, and white moons wake,
Watchful from afar
What the night's ways are
For the morning's sake.

Many names and flames
Pass and flash and fall,
Night-begotten names,
And the night reclaims,
As she bare them, all.

But the sun is one,
And the sun's name Right ;
And when light is none
Saving of the sun,
All men shall have light.

All shall see and be
Parcel of the morn ;
Ay, though blind were we,
None shall choose but see
When that day is born.

A NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE.

TO JOSEPH MAZZINI.

"Send the stars light, but send not love to me."—*Shelley*.

1.

OUT of the dawning heavens that hear
Young wings and feet of the new year
Move through their twilight, and shed round
Soft showers of sound,
Soothing the season with sweet rain,
If greeting come to make me fain,
What is it I can send again ?

2.

I know not if the year shall send
Tidings to usward as a friend,
And salutation, and such things
Bear on his wings
As the soul turns and thirsts unto
With hungering eyes and lips that sue
For that sweet food which makes all new.

3.

I know not if his light shall be
Darkness, or else light verily :
I know but that it will not part
Heart's faith from heart,
Truth from the trust in truth, nor hope
From sight of days unsealed that ope
Beyond one poor year's horoscope.

4.

That faith in love which love's self gives,
O master of my spirit, lives,
Having in presence unremoved
Thine head beloved,

The shadow of thee, the semitone
Of thy voice heard at heart and known,
The light of thee not set nor flown.

5.

Seas, lands, and hours, can these divide
Love from love's service, side from side,
Though no sound pass nor breath be heard
Of one good word ?
To send back words of trust to thee
Were to send wings to love, when he
With his own strong wings covers me.

6.

Who shall teach singing to the spheres,
Or motion to the flight of years ?
Let soul with soul keep hand in hand
And understand,
As in one same abiding-place
We keep one watch for one same face
To rise in some short sacred space.

7.

And all space midway is but nought
To keep true heart from faithful thought,
As under twilight stars we wait
By Time's shut gate
Till the slow soundless hinges turn,
And through the depth of years that yearn
The face of the Republic burn.

~ 1870.

MATER DOLOROSA.

Citoyen, lui dit Enjolras, ma mère, c'est la République.—*Les Misérables*.

WHO is this that sits by the way, by the
wild wayside,
In a rent stained raiment, the robe of a
cast-off bride,
In the dust, in the rainfall sitting, with
soiled feet bare,
With the night for a garment upon her,
with torn wet hair?
She is fairer of face than the daughters of
men, and her eyes,
Worn through with her tears, are deep as
the depth of skies.

This is she for whose sake being fallen, for
whose abject sake,
Earth groans in the blackness of darkness,
and men's hearts break.
This is she for whose love, having seen her,
the men that were
Poured life out as water, and shed their
souls upon air
This is she for whose glory their years were
counted as foam;
Whose face was a light upon Greece, was
a fire upon Rome

Is it now not surely a vain thing, a foolish
and vain,
To sit down by her, mourn to her, serve
her, partake in the pain?
She is grey with the dust of time on his
manifold ways,
Where her faint feet stumble and falter
through yearlong days
Shall she help us at all, O fools, give fruit
or give fame.
Who herself is a name despised, a rejected
name?

We have not served her for guerdon. If
any do so,
That his mouth may be sweet with such
honey, we care not to know.
We have drunk from a wine-unsweetened,
a perilous cup,
A draught very bitter. The kings of the
earth stood up,

And the rulers took counsel together to
smite her and slay;
And the blood of her wounds is given us
to drink to-day.

Can these bones live? or the leaves that
are dead leaves bud?
Or the dead blood drawn from her veins be
in your veins blood?
Will ye gather up water again that was
drawn and shed?
In the blood is the life of the veins, and her
veins are dead
For the lives that are over are over, and
past things past;
She had her day, and it is not; was first,
and is last.

Is it nothing unto you then, all ye that pass
by
If her breath be left in her lips if she live
now or die?
Behold now, O people, and say if she be
not fair
Whom your fathers followed to find her
with praise and prayer,
And rejoiced having found her, though roof
they had none nor bread;
But ye care not; what is it to you if her own
day be dead?

It was well with our fathers; their sound
was in all men's heads;
There was fire in their hearts, and the
hunger of fight in their hands.
Naked and strong they went forth on her
strength like flame,
For her loves and her name's sake of old,
her republican name;
But their children by kings made quiet, by
priests made wise,
Love better the heat of their hearths than
the light of her eyes.

Are they children of these thy children in-
deed who have sold
O golden goddess the light of thy face for
gold?

Are they sons indeed the sons of thy day-
spring of hope,
Whose lives are in t'ief of an emperor, whose
souls of a Pope?

Hide then thine head, O beloved; thy time
is done;

Thy kingdom is broken in heaven, and
blind thy sun.

What sleep is upon you, to dream she indeed
shall rise,

When the hopes are dead in her heart as
the tears in her eyes?

If ye sing of her dead will she stir? if ye
weep for her, weep?

Come away now, leave her; what hath she
to do but sleep?

But ye that mourn are alive, and have years
to be;

And life is good, and the world is wiser
than we.

Yea, wise is the world and mighty, with
years to give,

And years to promise; but how long now
shall it live?

And foolish and poor is faith, and her ways
are bare,

Till she find the way of the sun, and the
morning air,

In that hour shall this dead face shine as
the face of the sun,

And the soul of man and her soul and the
world's be one.

MATER TRIUMPHALIS.

MOTHER of man's time-travelling genera-
tions,

Breath of his nostrils, heartblood of his
heart,

God above all Gods worshipped of all na-
tions,

Light above light, law beyond law thou
art.

Thy face is as a sword smiting in sunder
Shadows and chains and dreams and iron
things;

The sea is dumb before thy face, the thunder
Silent, the skies are narrower than thy
wings.

Angels and Gods, spirit and sense, thou
takest

In thy right hand as drops of dust or dew;
The temples and the towers of time thou
breakest,

His thoughts and words and works, to
make them new.

All we have wandered from thy ways, have
hidden

Eyes from thy glory and ears from calls
they heard;

Called of thy trumpets vainly, called and
chidden,

Scourged of thy speech and wounded of
thy word

We have known thee and have not known
thee; stood beside thee,

Felt thy lips breathe, set foot where thy
feet trod,

Loved and renowned and worshipped and
denied thee,

As thou thou wert but as another God.

"One hour for sleep," we said, "and yet
one other;

All day we served her, and who shall
serve by night?

Not knowing of thee, thy face not knowing,
O mother,

O light wherethrough the darkness is as
light.

Men that forsook thee hast thou not for-
saken,

Races of men that knew not hast thou
known:

Nations that slept thou hast doubted not to
waken

Worshippers of strange Gods to make
thine own.

All old grey histories hiding thy clear fea-
tures,

O secret spirit and sovereign, all men's
tales,

Creeds woven of men thy children and thy
creatures,

They have woven for vestures of thee and
for veils.

Thine hands, without election or exemption,
 Feed all men fainting from false peace or
 strife,
 O thou, the resurrection and redemption,
 The godhead and the manhood and the
 life.

The wings shadow the waters ; thine eyes
 lighten
 The horror of the hollows of the night ;
 The depths of the earth and the dark places
 brighten
 Under thy feet, whiter than fire is white.

Death is subdued to thee, and hell's bands
 broken ;
 Where thou art only is heaven ; who
 hears not thee,
 Time shall not hear him ; when men's
 names are spoken,
 A nameless sign of death shall his name
 be.

Deathless shall be the death, the name be
 nameless ;
 Sterile of stars his twilight time of death ;
 With fire of hell shall shame consume him
 shameless,
 And dying, all the night darken his death.

The years are as thy garments, the world's
 ages
 As sandals bound and loosed from thy
 swift feet ;
 Time serves before thee, as one that hath
 for wages
 Praise or shame only, bitter words or
 sweet.

Thou sayest "Well done," and all a cen-
 tury kindles ;
 Again thou sayest "Depart from sight
 of me,"
 And all the light of face of all men dwindles,
 And the age is as the broken glass of
 thee.

The night is as a seal set on men's faces,
 On faces fallen of men that take no
 light
 Nor give light in the deeps of the dark
 places,
 Blind things incorporate with the body of
 night.

Their souls are serpents winterbound and
 frozen,
 Their shame is as a tame beast, at their
 feet
 Couched ; their cold lips deride thee and
 thy chosen,
 Their lying lips made grey with dust for
 meat.

Then when their time is full and days run
 over,
 The splendor of thy sudden brow made
 bare
 Darkens the morning ; thy bared hands
 uncover
 The veils of light and night and the awful
 air.

And the world naked as a new-born maiden
 Stands virginal and splendid as at birth,
 With all thine heaven of all its light un-
 laden,
 Of all its love unburdened all thine earth.

For the utter earth and the utter air of
 heaven
 And the extreme depth is thine and the
 extreme height ;
 Shadows of things and veils of ages riven
 Are as men's kings unkingdomed in thy
 sight.

Through the iron years, the centuries
 brazen gated,
 By the ages barred impenetrable doors,
 From the evening to the morning have we
 waited,
 Should thy foot haply sound on the awlul
 floors.

The floors untrodden of the sun's feet
 glimmer,
 The star-unstricken pavements of the
 night ;
 Do the lights burn inside ? the lights was
 dimmer
 On festal faces withering out of sight.

The crowned heads lose the light on them :
 it may be
 Dawn is at hand to smite the loud feast
 dumb :
 To blind the torch-lit centuries till the day
 be,
 The feasting kingdoms till thy kingdom
 come.

Shall it not come? deny they or dissemble,
Is it not even as lightning from on high
Now? and though many a soul close eyes
and tremble,
How should they tremble at all who love
thee as I?

I am thine harp between thine hands, O
mother!

All my strong chords are strained with
love of thee.

We grapple in love and wrestle, as each
with other

Wrestle the wind and the reluctant
sea.

I am no courtier of thee sober-suited,
Who loves a little for a little pay.

Me not thy winds and storms nor thrones
disrooted

Nor molten crowns nor thine own sins
dismay.

Sinned hast thou sometime, therefore art
thou sinless;

Stained hast thou been, who art there-
fore without stain;

Even as man's soul is kin to thee, but
kinless

Thou, in whose womb Time sows the
all-various grain.

I do not bid thee spare me, O dreadful
mother!

I pray thee that thou spare not, of thy
grace.

How were it with me then, if ever another
Should come to stand before thee in this
my place?

I am the trumpet at thy lips, thy clarion
Full of thy cry, sonorous with thy breath;

The grave of souls born worms and creeds
grown carrion

Thy blast of judgment fills with fires of
death.

Thou art the player whose organ-keys are
thunders,

And I beneath thy foot the pedal prest;

Thou art the ray whereat the rent night
sunders,

And I the cloudlet borne upon thy breast.

I shall burn up before thee, pass and perish,
As haze in sunrise on the red sea-line;

But thou from dawn, sunseting shalt
cherish

The thoughts that and souls that
frighted mine.

Reared between night and noon and truth
and error,

Each twilight-travelling bird that trills
and screams

Sickens at midday, nor can face for terror
The imperious heaven's inevitable ex-
tremes.

I have no spirit of skill with equal fingers
At sign to sharpen or to slacken strings;

I keep no time of song with gold-perched
singers

And chirp of linnets on the wrists of
kins.

I am thy storm-thrush of the days that
darken,

Thy petrel in the foam that bears thy
bark

To port through night and tempest; if
thou hearken,

My voice is in thy heaven before the
lark.

My song is in the mist that hides thy
morning,

My cry is up before the day for thee;

I have heard thee and beheld thee and give
warning,

Before thy wheels divide the sky and sea.

Birds shall wake with thee voiced and
feathered fairer,

To see in summer what I see in spring;

I have eyes and heart to endure thee, O
thunder-bearer,

And they shall be who shall have tongues
to sing.

I have love at least, and have not fear, and
part not

From thine unnavigable and wingless
way;

Thou tarriest, and I have not said thou art
not,

Nor all thy night long have denied thy
day.

Darkness to daylight shall lift up thy pæan
Hill to hill thunder, vale cry back to vale

With wind-notes as of eagles Æschylean,
And Sappho singing in the nightingale.

Sung to by mighty sons of dawn and daughters,
Of this night's songs thine ear shall keep but one ;
That supreme song which shook the channelled waters,

And called thee skyward as God calls the sun.

Come, though all heaven again be fire above thee ;
Though death before thee come to clear thy sky ;
Let us but see in his thy face who love thee ;
Yea, though thou slay us, arise and let us die.

A MARCHING SONG.

We mix from many lands,
We march for very far ;
In hearts and lips and hands
Our staffs and weapons are ;
The light we walk in darkens sun and moon and star.

It doth not flame and wane
With years and spheres that roll,
Storm cannot shake nor stain
The strength that makes it whole,
The fire that moulds and moves it of the sovereign soul.

We are they that have to cope
With time till time retire ;
We live on hopeless hope,
We feed on tears and fire ;
Time, foot by foot, gives back before our sheer desire.

From the edge of harsh derision,
From discord and defeat,
From doubt and lame division,
We pluck the fruit and eat ;
And the mouth fits it bitter, and the spirit sweet.

We strive with time at wrestling
Till time be on our side
And hope, our plumeless nestling,
A full-fledged eaglet ride
Down the loud length of storm its windward wings divide.

We are set with our belief,
Clothed with our will and crowned ;
Hope, fear, delight and grief,
Before our will give ground ;
Their calls are in our ears as shadows of dead sound.

All but the heart forsakes us,
All fails us but the will ;
Keen treason tracks and takes us
In pits for blood to fill ;
Friend falls from friend, and faith for faith lays wait to kill.

Out under moon and stars
And shafts of the urgent sun
Whose face on prison bars
And mountain-heads is one,
Our march is everlasting till time's march be done.

Whither we know, and whence,
And dare not care where through.
Desires that urge the sense,
Fears changing old with new,
Pearls and pains beset the ways we press into ;

Earth gives us thorns to tread,
And all her thorns are trod ;
Through lands burnt black and red
We pass with feet unshod ;
Whence we would be man shall not keep us, nor man's God.

Through the great desert beasts
Howl at our backs by night,
And thunder-forging priest,
Blow their dead bale-fires bright,
And on their broken anvils beat out bolts for fight.

Inside their sacred smithies,
Though hot the hammer rings,
Their steel links snap like withies,
Their chains like twisted strings,
Their surest fetters are as plighted words of kings.

O nations undivided,
 O single people and free,
 We dreamers, we derided,
 We mad blind men that see,
 We bear you witness ere ye come that ye
 shall be.

Ye sitting among tombs,
 Ye standing round the gate,
 Whom fire-mouthed war consumes,
 Or cold-lipped peace bids wait,
 All tombs and bars shall open, every grave
 and grate.

The locks shall burst in sunder,
 The hinges shrieking spin,
 When time, whose hand is thunder,
 Lays hand upon the pin,
 And shoots the bolts reluctant, bidding all
 men in.

These eyeless times and earless,
 Shall these not see and hear,
 And all their hearts burn fearless
 That were afrost for fear ?
 Is day not hard upon us, yea, not our day
 near ?

France ? from its grey dejection
 Make manifest the red
 Tempestuous resurrection
 Of thy most sacred head !
 Break thou the covering cerecloths ; rise up
 from the dead.

And thou, whom sea-walls sever
 From lands unwall'd with seas,
 Wilt thou endure for ever,
 O Milton's England, these ?
 Thou that wast his Republic, wilt thou
 clasp their knees ?

These royalties rust-eaten,
 These worm-corroded lies,
 That keep thine head storm-beaten
 And unlike strength of eyes
 From the open heaven and air of intercepted
 skies ;

These pri'celings with gauze winglets
 That buzz in the air unfurled,
 These summer-swariming kinglets
 These thin worms crowned and
 curled,
 That bask and blink and warm themselves
 about the world ;

These fanged meridian vermin,
 Shrill gnats that crowd the dusk,
 Night-moths whose nestling ermine
 Smells foul of mould and musk,
 Blind flesh-flies hatched by dark and ham-
 pered in their husk ;

These honors without honor,
 These ghost-like gods of gold,
 This earth that wears upon her
 To keep her heart from cold
 No memory more of men that brought it
 fire of old ;

These limbs, supine, unbuckled,
 In rottenness of rest,
 These sleepy lips blood-suckled
 And satiate of thy breast,
 These dull wide mouths that drain thee dry
 and call thee blest ;

These masters of thee mindless
 That wear thee out of mind,
 These children of thee kindless
 That use thee out of kind,
 Whose hands strew gold before thee and
 contempt behind ;

Who have turned thy name to laughter,
 Thy sea-like sounded name
 That now none hearkens after
 For faith in its free fame,
 Who have robbed thee of thy trust and given
 thee of their shame ;

These hours that mock each other,
 These years that kill and die,
 Are these thy gains, our mother,
 For all thy gains thrown by ?
 Is this that end whose promise made thine
 heart so high ?

With empire and with treason
 The first right hand made fast,
 But in man's nobler season
 To put forth help the last,
 Love turns from thee, and memory disavows
 thy past.

Lest thine own sea disclaim thee,
 Lest thine own sons despise,
 Lest lips shoot out that name thee
 And seeing thee mer shut eyes,
 Take thought with all thy people, turn thine
 head and rise.

Turn thee, lift up thy face ;
 What ails thee to be dead ?

Ask of thyself for grace,
 Seek of thyself for bread,
 And who shall starve or shame thee, blind
 or bruise thine head?

The sun in thy sight,
 The same sea in thine ears,
 That saw thine hour at height,
 That sang thy song of years,
 Behold and hearken for thee, knowing thy
 hopes and fears.

O people, O perfect nation,
 O England that shall be,
 How long till thou take station?
 How long till thralls live free?
 How long till all thy soul be one with all
 thy sea?

Ye that from south to north,
 Ye that from east to west,
 Stretch hands of longing forth
 And keep your eyes from rest,
 Lo, when ye will, we bring you gifts of
 what is best.

From the awful northland pines
 That skirt their wan dim seas
 To the ardent Apennines
 And sun-struck Pyrenees,
 One frost on all their frondage bites the
 blossoming trees.

The leaves look up for light,
 For heat of helpful air;
 The trees of oldest height
 And thin storm-shaken hair
 Seek with gaunt hands up heavenward if the
 sun be there.

The woods where souls walk lonely,
 The forests girt with night,
 Desire the day-star only
 And firstlings of the light
 Not seen of slaves nor shining in their
 masters' sight.

We have the morning star,
 O foolish people, O kings!
 With us the day-springs are,
 Even all the fresh day-springs;
 For us, and with us, all the multitudes of
 things.

O sorrowing hearts of slaves,
 We heard you beat from far!
 We bring the light that saves,
 We bring the morning star;

Freedom's good things we bring you,
 whence all good things are.

With us the winds and fountains
 And lightnings live in tune;
 The morning-colored mountains
 That burn into the noon,
 The mist's mild veil on valleys muffled from
 the moon:

The thunder-darkened highlands
 And lowlands hot with fruit,
 Sea-bays and shoals and islands,
 And cliffs that foil man's foot,
 And all the flower of large-limbed life and
 all the root:

The clangor of sea-eagles
 That teach the morning mirth
 With baying of heaven's beagles
 That seek their prey on earth,
 By sounding strait and channel, gulf and
 reach and firth.

With us the fields and rivers,
 The grass that summer fills,
 The haze where morning quivers,
 The peace at heart of hills,
 The sense that kindles nature, and the
 soul that fills.

With us all natural sights,
 All notes of natural scale;
 With us the starry lights;
 With us the nightingale;
 With us the heart and secret of the worldly
 tale.

The strife of things and beauty,
 The fire and light adored,
 Truth, and life-lightening duty,
 Love without crown or sword,
 That by his might and godhead makes man
 god and lord.

These have we, these are ours,
 That no priests give nor kings;
 The honey of all these flowers,
 The heart of all these springs;
 Ours, for where freedom lives not, there
 live no good things.

Rise, ere the dawn be risen;
 Come, and be all souls fed;
 From field and street and prison
 Come, for the feast is spread;
 Live, for the truth is living; wake, for
 night is dead.

SIENA.

INSIDE this northern summer's fold
The fields are full of naked gold,
Broadcast from heaven on lands it loves;
The green veiled air is full of doves;
Soft leaves that sift the sunbeams let
Light on the small warm grasses wet
Fall in short broken kisses sweet,
And break again like waves that beat
Round the sun's feet.

But I, for all this English mirth
Of golden-shod and dancing days,
And the old green-girt sweet-hearted earth
Desire what here no spells can raise.
Far hence, with holier heavens above,
The lovely city of my love
Bathes deep in the sun-satiate air
That flows round no fair thing more fair
Her beauty bare.

There the utter sky is holier, there
More pure the intense white height of air,
More clear men's eyes that mine would
meet,
And the sweet springs of things more sweet.
There for this one warm note of doves
A clamor of a thousand loves
Storms the night's ear, the day's assails,
From the tempestuous nightingales,
And fills, and fails.

O gracious city well-beloved,
Italian, and a maiden crowned,
Siena, my feet are no more moved
Toward thy strange-shapen mountain-
bound:

But my heart in me turns and moves
O lady loveliest of my loves,
Toward thee, to lie before thy feet
And gaze from thy fair fountain-seat
Up the sheer street;

And the house midway hanging see
That saw Saint Catherine bodily,
Felt on its floors her sweet feet move,
And the live light of fiery love
Burn from her beautiful strange face,
As in the sanguine sacred place
Where in pure hands she took the head
Severed, and with pure lips still red
Kissed the lips dead.

For years through, sweetest of the saints,
In quiet without cease she wrought,
Till cries of men and fierce complaints
From outward moved her maiden
thought;
And prayers she heard and sighs toward
France,
'God, send us back deliverance,
Send back thy servant, lest we die!'
With an exceeding bitter cry
They smote the sky.

Then in her sacred saving hands
She took the sorrows of the lands,
With maiden palms she lifted up
The sick time's blood-embittered cup,
And in her virgin garment furled
The faint limbs of a wounded world.
Clothed with calm love and clear desire,
She went forth in her soul's attire,
A missive fire.

Across the might of men that strove
It shone, and over heads of kings;
And molten in red flames of love
Were swords and many monstrous things;
And shields were lowered, and snapt were
spears,
And sweeter-tuned the clamorous years;
And faith came back, and peace, that were
Fled; for she bade, saying, "Thou, God's
heir,
Hast thou no care

"Lo, men lay waste thine heritage
Still, and much heathen people rage
Against thee, and devise vain things.
What comfort in the face of kings,
What counsel is there? Turn thine eyes
And thine heart from them in like wise;
Turn thee unto thine holy place
To help us that of God for grace
Require thy face.

For who shall hear us if not thou
In a strange land? what doest thou there?
Thy sheep are spoiled, and the ploughers
plough
Upon us; why hast thou no care?
For all this, and beyond strange hills
Liest unregardful what snow chills

Thy foldless flock, or what rains beat?
Lo, in thine ears, before thy feet,
Thy lost sheep bleat.

“And strange men feed on faultless lives,
And there is blood, and men put knives,
Shepherd, unto the young lamb’s throat;
And one hath eaten, and one smote,
And one had hunger and is fed
Full of the flesh of these, and red
With blood of these as who drinks wine.
And God knoweth, who hath sent thee a
sign,
If these were thine.”

But the Pope’s heart within him burned,
So that he rose up, seeing the sign,
And came among them; but she turned
Back to her daily way divine,
And fed her faith with silent things,
And lived her life with curbed white wings,
And mixed herself with heaven and died:
And now on the sheer city-side
Smiles like a bride.

You see her in the fresh clear gloom,
Where walls shut out the flame and bloom,
Of full-breathed summer, and the roof
Keeps the keen ardent air aloof
And sweet weight of the violent sky:
There bodily beheld on high,
She seems as one hearing in tune
Heaven within heaven, at heaven’s full
noon,
In sacred swoon:

A solemn swoon of sense that aches
With imminent blind heat of heaven,
While all the wide-eyed spirit wakes,
Vigilant of the supreme Seven,
Whose choral flames in God’s sight move,
Made unendurable with love,
That without wind or blast or breath
Compels all things through life and death
Whither God saith.

There on the dim side-chapel wall
Thy mighty touch memorial,
Razzi, raised up, for ages dead,
And fixed for us her heavenly head:
And, rent with plaited thorn and rod,
Bared the live likeness of her God
To men’s eyes turning from strange lands,
Where, pale from thine immortal hands,
Christ wounded stands;

And the blood blots his holy hair
And white brows over hungering eyes
That plead against us, and the fair
Mute lips forlorn of words or sighs
In the great torment that bends down
His bruised head with the bloomless crown,
White as the unfruitful thorn-flower,
A God beheld in dreams that were
Beheld of her.

In vain on all these sins and years
Falls the sad blood, fall the slow tears;
In vain poured forth as watersprings,
Priests, on your altars, and ye, kings,
About your seats of sanguine gold;
Still your God, spat upon and sold,
Bleeds at your hands; but now is gone
All his flock from him saving one;
Judas alone.

Surely your race it was that he.
O men signed backward with his name,
Beholding in Gethsemane
Bled the red bitter sweat of shame,
Knowing how the word of Christian should
Mean to men evil and not good,
Seem to men shameful for your sake,
Whose lips, for all the prayers they make,
Man’s blood must slake.

But blood nor tears ye love not, you
That my love leads my longing to,
Fair as the world’s old faith of flowers,
O golden goddesses of ours!
From what Idalian rose-pleasance
Hath Aphrodite bidden glance
The lovelier lightnings of your feet?
From what sweet Papian sward or seat
Led you more sweet?

O white three sisters, three as one,
With flowerlike arms for flowery bands
Your linked limbs glitter like the sun,
And time lies beaten at your hands.
Time and wild years and wars and men
Pass, and ye care not whence or when;
With calm lips over sweet for scorn,
Ye watch-night pass, O children born,
Of the old world morn.

Ah, in this strange and shrineless place,
What doth a goddess, what a Grace,
Where no Greek worships her shrined limbs
With wreaths and Cytherean hymns?
Where no lute makes luxurious
The adoring airs in Amathus,

Till the maid, knowing her mother near,
Sobs with love, aching with sweet fear?
What do ye here?

For the outer land is sad, and wears
A raiment of a flaming fire;
And the fierce fruitless mountain stairs
Climb, yet seem wroth and loth to aspire,
Climb, and break, and are broken down,
And through their clefts and crests the town

Looks west and sees the dead sun lie,
In sanguine death that stains the sky
With angry dye.

And from the war-worn wastes without
In twilight, in the time of doubt,
One sound comes of one whisper where
Moved with low motions of slow air
The great trees nigh the castle swing
In the sad colored evening;
"Recorditi di me che son
La Pia"—that small sweet word alone
Is not yet gone.

"Recorditi di me"—the sound
Soul out of deep dumb days remote
Across the fiery and fatal ground

Comes tender as a hurt bird's note
To where a ghost with empty hands,
A woe-worn ghost, her palace stands
In the mid city, where the strong
Bells turn the sunset to song,
And the towers throng.

With other face, with speech the same,
A mightier maiden's likeness came
Late among mourning men that slept,
A sacred ghost that went and wept,
Whit: as the passion-wounded Lamb,
Saying, 'Ah, remember me, that am
talia.' (From deep sea to sea
Earth heard, earth knew her, that this was
she.)

"Ricorditi."

Love made me of all things fairest thing,
And hate unmade me; this knows he
Who with God's sacerdotal ring
Enrings mine hand, espousing me
Yea, in thy myriad-mooded woe,
Yea, Mother, hast thou not said so?
Have not our hearts within us stirred,
O thou most holiest, at thy word?
Have we not heard?

As this dead tragic land that she
Found deadly, such was time to thee;
Years passed thee withering in the red
Maremma, years that deemed thee dead,
Ages that sorrowed or that scorned;
And all this while though all they mourned
Thou sawest the end of things unclean,
And the unborn that should see thee a
queen.
Have we not seen?

The weary poet, thy sad son,
Upon thy soil, under thy skies,
Saw all Italian things save one—
Italia; this thing missed his eyes;
The old mother might, the breast, the face,
That reared, that lit the Roman race;
This not Leopardia saw; but we,
What is it, Mother that we see,
What if not thee?

Look thou from Sienna southward home,
Where the priest's pall hangs rent on Rome,
And through the red rent swaddling bands
Toward thine she strains her laboring hands.
Look thou and listen, and let be
All the dead quick all the bond free;
In the blind eyes let there be sight;
In the eighteen centuries of the night
Let there be light.

Bow down the beauty of thine head,
Sweet, and with lips of living breath
Kiss thy sons sleeping, and thy dead,
That there be no more sleep or death.
Give us thy light, thy might, thy love,
Whom thy face seen afar above
Drew to thy feet; and when being free,
Thou hast blest thy children born to thee,
Bless also me.

Mé that when others played or slept
Sat still under thy dress and wept.
Me who so early and unaware
Felt fall on bent bared brows and hair
(Thin drops of the overflowing blood!)
The bitter blessing of thy blood;
The sacred shadow of thy pain,
Thine, the true maiden-mother, slain
And raised again.

Me consecrated, if I might,
To praise thee, or to love at least,
O mother of all men's dear delight
Thou madest a choral-souled boy pries

Before my lips had leave to sing,
Or my hands hardly strength to cing
About the intolerable tree
Whereto they had nailed my heart and thee
And said, "Let be.

For to thee too the high Fates gave
Grace to be sacrificed and save,
That being arisen, in the equal sun,
God and the People should be one;
By those red roads thy footprints trod,
Man more divine, more human God,
Saviour; that where no light was known
But darkness, and a daytime down,
Light should be shown.

Let there be light, O Italy !
For our feet falter in the night,
O lamp of living years to be,
O light of God, let there be light !
Fill with a love keener than flame
Men sealed in spirit with thy name,
The cities and the Roman skies,

COR CORDIUM.

O HEART of hearts, the chalice of love's
fire,

Hid round with flowers and all the
bounty of bloom.

O wonderful and perfect heart for whom
The lyrist liberty made life a lyre;
O heavenly heart at whose most dear
desire

Dead love, living and singing, cleft his
tomb,
And with him risen and regent in death's
room

All day thy choral pulses rang full choir;
O heart whose beating blood was running
song,

O sole thing sweeter than thine own
songs were,

Help us for thy free love's sake to be
free.

True for thy truth's sake, for thy strength's
sake strong,

Till very liberty make clean and fair
The nursing earth as the sepulchral
sea.

Where men with other than man's eyes
Saw thy sun rise.

For theirs thou wast and thine were they
Whose names outshine thy very day;
For they are thine and theirs thou art
Whose blood beats living in man's heart,
Remembering ages fled and dead
Wherein for thy sake these men bled;
They that saw Trebia, they that see
Mentana, they in years to be
That shall see thee.

For thine are all of us, and ours
Thou; till the seasons bring to birth
A perfect people, and all the powers
Be with them that bear fruit on earth;
Till the inner heart of man be one
With freedom, and the sovereign sun;
And Time, in likeness of a guide,
Lead the Republic as a bride
Up to God's side.

IN SAN LORENZO.

Is thine hour come to wake, O slumbering
Night?

Hath not the Dawn a message in thine
ear?

Though thou be stone, and sleep, yet
shalt thou hear

When the word falls from heaven—Let
there be light,

Thou knowest we would not do thee despite
To wake thee while the old sorrow and
shame were near;

We spak' not loud for thy sake, and
for fear

Lest thou shouldst lose the rest that was
thy right,

The blessing given thee that was thine
alone,

The happiness to sleep and to be stone;
Nay, we kept silence of thee for thy sake

Albeit we knew thee alive, and left with
thee

The great good gift to feel not nor to see
But will not yet thine Angel bid thee
wake?

TIRESIAS.

PART I.

IT is an hour before the hour of dawn.

Set in mine hand my staff and leave me
here

Outside the hollow house that blind men
fear,

More blind than I who live on life with-
drawn

And feel on eyes that see not but foresee

The shadow of death which clothes
Antigone.

Here lay her living body that here lies

Dead, if man living know what thing is
death,

If life be all made up of blood and
breath,

And no sense be save as of ears and eyes,
But heart there is not, tongue there is
not found,

To think or sing what verge hath life or
bound.

In the beginning when the powers that
made

The young child man a little loved him,
seeing

His joy of life and fair face of his being,
And bland and laughing with the man-
child played,

As friends they saw on our divine one
day

King Cadmus take to queen Harmonia.

The strength of soul that builds up as with
hands

Walls spiritual and towers and towns of
thought

Which only fate, not force, can bring to
nought,

Took then to wife the light of all men's
lands,

War's child and love's, most sweet and
wise and strong,

Order of things and rule and guiding
song.

It was long since : yea, even the sun that
saw

Remembers hardly what was, nor how
long,

And now the wise heart of the worldly
song

Is perished, and the holy hand of law

Can set no tune on time, nor help again

The power of thought to build up life for
men.

Yea, surely are they now transformed or
dead,

And sleep below this world, where no
sun warms,

Or move about it now in formless forms

Incognizable, and all their lordship fled ;

And where they stood up singing crawl
and hiss

With fangs that kill behind their lips that
kiss.

Yet though her marriage-garment, seeming
fair

Was dyed in sin and woven of jealousy
To turn their seed to poison, time shall
see

The gods reissue from them, and repair
Their broken stamp of godhead, and
again

Thought and wise love sing words of law
to men.

I, Tiresias the prophet, seeing in Thebes
Much evil, and the misery of men's
hands

Who sow with fruitless wheat the stones
and sands,

With fruitful thorns the fallows and warm
glebes,

Bade their hands hold lest worse hap
came to pass,

But which of you had heed of Tiresias ?

I am as Time's self in mine own wearied
mind,

Whom the strong heavy-footed years
have led

From night to night and dead men unto
dead,

And from the blind hope to the memory
blind ;

For each man's life is woven, as Time's
life is,

Of blind young hopes and old blind
memories.

- I am a soul outside of death and birth.
 I see before me and afterward I see.
 O child, O corpse, the live dead face of thee,
 Whose life and death are one thing upon earth
 Where day kills night and night again kills day
 And dies : but where is that Harmonia ?
- O all-beholden light not seen of me,
 Air, and warm winds that under the sun's eye
 Stretch your strong wings at morning ;
 and thou, sky,
 Whose hollow circle engirdling earth and sea
 All night the set stars limit, and all day
 The moving sun remeasures ; ye, I say,
- Ye heights of hills, and thou Dircean spring
 Inviolable, and ye towers that saw cast down
 Seven kings⁷ keen-sighted toward your seven-faced town
 And quenched the red seed of one sightless king ;
 And thou, for death less dreadful than for birth,
 Whose wild leaves hide the horror of the earth,
- O mountain whereon gods made chase of kings,
 Cithæron, thou that sawest on Pentheus dead
 Fangs of a mother fasten and wax red
 And satiate with a son thy swollen springs,
 And heardst her cry fright all thine eyries' nests
 Who gave death suck at sanguine-suckling breasts ;
- ea, and a grief more grievous, without name,
 A curse too grievous for the name of grief,
 Thou sawest, and heardst the rumor scare belief
 Even unto death and madness, when the flame
 Was lit whose ashes dropped about the pyre
- That of two brethren made one sundering fire ;
- O bitter nurse, that on thine hard bare knees
 Rear'dst for his fate the bloody-footed child
 Whose hands should be more bloodily defiled
 And the old blind feet walk wearier ways than these,
 Whose seed, brought forth in darkness unto doom,
 Should break as fire out of his mother's womb ;
- I hear you witness as ye hear to me,
 Time, day, night, sun, stars, life, death,
 air, sea, earth,
 And ye that round the human house of birth
 Watch with veiled heads and weaponed hands, and see
 Good things and evil, strengthless yet and dumb,
 Sit in the clouds with cloudlike hours to come ;
- Ye forces without form and viewless power⁸
 That have the keys of all are years in hold,
 That prophecy too late with tongues of gold,
 In a strange speech whose words are perished hours,
 I witness to you what good things ye give
 As ye to me what evil while I live.
- What should I do to blame you, what to praise,
 For floral hours and hours funeral ?
 What should I do to curse or bless at all
 For winter-woven or summer-colored days ?
 Curse he that will and bless whoso can,
 I have no common part in you with man.
- I hear a springing water, whose quick sound
 Makes softer the soft sunless patient air,
 And the wind's hand is laid on my thin hair
 Light as a lover's and the grasses round¹
 Have odors in them of green bloom and rain
 Sweet as the kiss wherewith sleep kisses pain.

I hear the low sound of the spring of time,
Still beating as the low live throb of blood
And where its waters gathered head and
flood

I hear change moving on them, and the
chime
Across them of reverberate wings of
hours
Sounding, and feel the future air of
flowers.

The wind of change is soft as snow, and
sweet

The sense thereof as roses in the sun,
The faint wind springing with the spring
that run,

The dim sweet smell of flowering hopes, and
heat

Of unbeholden sunrise ; yet how long
I know not, till the morning put forth
song.

I prophesy of life, who live with death ;
Of joy, being sad ; of sunlight, who am
blind ;

Of man, whose ways are alien from man-
kind

And his lips are not parted with man's
breath ;

I am a word out of the speechless years,
The tongue of time, that no man sleeps
who hears.

I stand a shadow across the door of doom,
Athwart the lintel of death's house, and
wait ;

Nor quick nor dead, nor flexible by fate,
Nor quite of earth nor wholly of the tomb ;
A voice, a vision, light as fire or air,
Driven between days that shall be and
that were.

I prophesy, with feet upon a grave,
Of death cast out and life devouring death
As flame doth wood and stubble with a
breath ;

Of freedom, thou all manhood were one
slave ;

Of truth, though all the world were liar
of love,

That time nor hate can raze the witness of.

Life that was given for love's sake and his
law's

Their powers have no more power on ;
they divide

Spoils wrung from lust or wrath of man
or pride,

And keen oblivion without pity or pause
Sets them on fire and scatters them on
air

Like ashes shaken from a suppliant's hair.

But life they lay no hand on ; life once
given

No force of theirs hath competence to
take ;

Life that was given for some divine
thing's sake,

To mix the bitterness of earth with heaven,
Light with man's night, and music with
his breath,

Dies not, but makes its living food of
death.

I have seen this, who live where men are
not,

In the high starless air of fruitful night
On that serenest and obscurest height

Where dead and unborn things are one in
thought

And whence the live unconquerable
springs

Feed full of force the torrents of new
things.

I have seen this, who saw long since, being
man,

As now I know not, if indeed I be,
The fair bare body of Wisdom good to
see

And evil whence my light and night began ;
Light on the goal and darkness on the
way,

Light all through night and darkness
all through day.

Mother, that by that Pegasean spring
Didst fold round in thine arms thy
blinded son,

Weeping " O holiest, what thing hast
thou done,

What, to my child ? woe's me that see the
thing !

Is this thy love to me-ward, and hereof
Must I take sample how the gods can
love ?

O child, thou hast seen indeed, poor
 child of mine,
 The breasts and flanks of Pallas bare in
 sight,
 But never shalt see more the dear sun's
 light,
 O Helicon, how great a pay 'is thine
 For some poor antelopes and wild-deer
 dead,
 My child's eyes hast thou taken in their
 stead—"

Mother, thou knowest not what he had to
 give,
 Thy goddess, thou then angered, for
 mine eyes;
 Fame and foreknowledge, and to be most
 most wise,
 And centuries of high-thoughted life to
 live,
 And in mine hand this guiding staff to be
 As eyesight to the feet of men that see.

Perchance I shall not die at all, nor pass
 The general door and lintel of men dead,
 Yet even the very tongue of wisdom said
 What grace should come with death to
 Tiersias,
 What special honor that God's hand
 accord
 Who gathers all men's nations as their
 lord.

And sometimes when the secret eye of
 thought
 Is changed with obscuration, and the
 sense-
 Aches with long pain of hollow pres-
 cience,
 And fieryforesight with foresuffering bought
 Seems even to infect my spirit and con-
 sume,
 Hunger and thirst come on me for the
 tomb.

I could be fain to drink my death and
 sleep,
 And no more wrapt about with bitter
 dreams
 Talk with the stars and with the winds
 and streams
 And with the inevitable years, and weep;
 For how should he who communes with
 the years
 Be sometime not a living spring of tears?

O child, that guided of thine only will
 Didst set thy maiden foot against the
 gate
 To strike 'it open ere thine hour of fate,
 Antigone, men say not thou dist ill,
 For love's sake and the reverence of his
 awe
 Divinely dying, slain by mortal law;

For love is awful as immortal death,
 And through thee surely hast thy brother
 won
 Rest, out of sight of our world-weary sun,
 And in the dead land where ye ghosts draw
 breath,
 A royal place and honor; so wast thou
 Happy, though earth have hold of thee
 too now.

So hast thou life and name inviolable
 And joy it may be, sacred and severe,
 Joy secret-souled beyond all hope or fear,
 A monumental joy wherein to dwell
 Secluse and silent, a selected state,
 Serene possession of thy proper fate.

Thou art not dead as these are dead who
 live
 Full of blind years, a sorrow-shaken
 kind,
 Nor as these are am I the prophet blind;
 They have not life that have nor heart to
 give
 Life, nor have eyesight who lack heart
 to see
 When to be not is better than to be

O ye whom time but bears with for a span,
 How long will ye be blind and dead, how
 long
 Make your own souls part of your own
 soul's wrong?
 Son of the word of the most high gods,
 man,
 Why wilt thou make thine hour of light
 and breath
 Emptier of all but shame than very
 death?

Fool, wilt thou live for ever? though thou
 care
 With all thine heart for life to keep it
 fast,
 Shall not thine hand forego it at the last?
 Lo, thy sure hour shall take thee by the
 hair

Sleeping, or when thou knowest not, or
wouldst fly ;
And as men died much mightier shalt
thou die.

Yea, they are dead, men much more worth
than thou ;
The savour of heroic lives that were,
Is it not mixed into thy common air ?
The sense of them is shed about thee now :
Feel not thy brows a wind blowing from
far ?
Aches not thy forehead with a future
star ?

The light that thou may'st make out of thy
name
Is in the wind of this same hour that
drives,
Blown within reach but once of all men's
lives ;
And he that puts forth hand upon the flame
Shall have it for a garland on his head
To sign him for a king among the dead.

But these men that the lessening years be-
hold,
Who sit the most part without flame or
crown,
And brawl and sleep and wear their life-
days down
With joys and griefs ignobler than of old
And care not if the better day shall be,—
Are these or art thou dead, Antigone ?

PART II.

As when one wakes out of a waning dream
And sees with instant eyes the naked
thought
Whereof the vision as a web was wrought,
I saw beneath a heaven of cloud and gleam,
Ere yet the heart of the young sun waxed
brave,
One like a prophet standing by a grave.

In the hoar heaven was hardly beam or
breath,
And all the colored hills and fields were
grey,
And the wind wandered seeking for the
day,
And wailed as though he had found her
done to death
And this grey hour had built to bury her
The hollow twilight for a sepulchre.

But in my soul I saw as in a glass
A pale and living body full of grace
There lying, and over it the prophet's
face
Fixed ; and the face was not of Tiresias,
For such a starry fire was in his eyes
As though their light it was that made
the skies.

Such eyes should God's have been when
very love
Looked forth of them and set the sun
afame,
And such his lips that called the light by
name
And bade the morning forth at sound
thereof ;
His face was sad and masterful as fate,
And like a star's his look compassionate.

Like a star's gazed on of sad eyes so long
It seems to yearn with pity, and all its
fire
As a man's heart to tremble with desire
And heave as though the light would bring
forth song
Yet from his face flashed lightning on
the land,
And like the thunder-bearer's was his
hand.

The steepness of strange stairs had tried his
feet,
And his lips yet seemed sick of that salt
bread
Wherewith the lips of banishment are
fed ;
But nothing was there in the world so
sweet
As the most bitter love, like God's own
grace,
Wherewith he gazed on that fair buried
face.

Grief and glad pride and passion and sharp
shame,
Wrath and remembrance, faith and hope
and hate
And pitiless pity of days degenerate,
Where in his eyes as an incorporate flame
That burned about her, and the heart
thereof
And central flower was very fire of love.

But all about her grave wherein she slept
 Were noises of the wild wind-footed
 years
 Whose footprints flying were full of blood
 and tears,
 Shrieks as of Mænads on their hills that
 leapt
 And yelled as beasts of ravin, and their
 meat
 Was the rent flesh of their own sons to
 eat :

And fiery shadows passing with strange
 cries ;
 And Sphinx-like shapes about the ruined
 lands,
 And the red reek of parricidal hands
 And intermixture of incestuous eyes,
 And light as of that self-divided flame
 Which made an end of the Cadmean
 name.

And I beheld again, and lo the grave,
 And the bright body laid therein as dead,
 And the same shadow across another
 head
 That bowed down silent on that sleeping
 slave
 Who was the lady of empire from her
 birth
 And light of all the kingdoms of the
 earth.

Within the compass of the watcher's hand
 All strengths of other men and divers
 powers
 Were held at ease and gathered up as
 flowers ;
 His heart was as the heart of his whole
 land,
 And at his feet as natural servants lay
 Twilight and dawn and night and labor-
 ing day.

He was most awful of the sons of God.
 Even now men seeing seemed at his lips
 to see
 The trumpet of the judgment that should
 be,
 And in his right hand terror for a rod,
 And in the breath that made the moun-
 tains bow
 The horned fire of Moses on his brow

The strong wind of the coming of the
 Lord
 Had blown as flame upon him, and
 brought down
 On his bare head from heaven fire for a
 crown,
 And fire was girt upon him as a sword
 To smite and lighten, and on what ways
 he trod
 There fell from him the shadow of a God.

Pale, with the whole world's judgment in
 his eyes,
 He stood and saw the grief and shame
 endure
 That he, though highest of angels, might
 not cure,
 And the same sins done under the same
 skies,
 And the same slaves to the same tyrants
 thrown,
 And fain he would have slept, and fain
 been stone.

But with unslumbering eyes he watched the
 sleep
 That sealed her sense whose eyes were
 suns of old ;
 And the night shut and opened, and
 behold,
 The same grave where those prophets came
 to weep,
 But she that lay therein had moved and
 stirred,
 And where those twain had watched her
 stood a third.

The tripled rhyme that closed in Paradise
 With Love's name sealing up its starry
 speech—
 The tripled might of hand that found in
 reach
 All crowns beheld far off of all men's eyes,
 Song, color, carven wonders of live
 stone—
 These were not, but the very soul alone.

The living spirit, the good gift of grace,
 The faith which takes of its own blood
 to give
 That the dead veins of buried hope may
 live,
 Came on her sleeping, face to naked face,

And from a soul more sweet than all the
south
Breathed love upon her sealed and
breathless mouth.

Between her lips the breath was blown as
fire,
And through her flushed veins leapt the
liquid life
And with sore passion and ambiguous
strife

The new birth rent her and the new desire
The will to live, the competence to be,
The sense to hearken and the soul to see.

And the third prophet standing by her
grave
Stretched forth his hand and touched
her, and her eyes,
Opened as sudden suns in heaven might
rise,
And her soul caught from his the faith to
save ;
Faith above creeds faith beyond records,
born

Of the pure, naked, fruitful, awful morn.
For in he daybreak now that night was
dead

The light, the shadow, the delight, the
pain,
The purpose and the passion of those
twain,
Seemed gathered on that third prophetic
head,
And all their crowns were as one crown,
and one
His face with her face in the living sun.

For even with that communion of their
eyes

His whole soul passed into her and made
her strong ;
And all the sounds and shows of shame
and wrong,
The hands that slays, the lip that mocks
and lies,
Temples and thrones that yet men seem
to see,—
Are these dead or art thou dead, Italy ?

THE SONG OF THE STANDARD.

MAIDEN most beautiful, mother most boun-
tiful, lady of lands,
Queen and republican, crowned of the
centuries whose years are thy sands,
See for thy sake what we bring to thee,
Italy, here in our hands.

This is the banner thy gonfalon, fair in the
front of thy fight,
Red from the hearts that were pierced for
thee, white as thy mountains are white,
Green as the spring of thy soul everlasting,
whose life-blood is light.

Take to thy bosom thy banner, a fair bird
fit for the nest,
Feathered for flight into sunrise or sunset,
for eastward or west,
Fledged for the flight everlasting, but held
yet warm to thy breast.

Gather it close to thee, song-bird or storm-
bearer, eagle or dove,
Lift it to sunward, a beacon beneath to the
beacon above,
Green as our hope in it, white as our faith
in it, red as our love.

Thunder and splendor of lightning are hid
in the folds of it furled ;
Who shall unroll it but thou, as thy bolt to
be handled and hurled,
Out of whose lips is the honey, whose bosom
the milk of the world ?

Out of thine hands hast thou fed us with
pasture of color and song ;
Glory and beauty by birthright to thee as
thy garments belong ;
Out of thine hands thou shalt give us as
surely deliverance from wrong.

Out of thine eyes thou hast shed on us love
as a lamp in our night,
Wisdom a lodestar to ships, and remem-
brance a flame-colored light ;
Out of thine eyes thou shalt shew us as
surely the sundawn of right.

Turn to us, speak to us, Italy, mother, but
once and a word,
None shall not follow thee, none shall not
serve thee, not one that has heard ;
Twice hast thou spoken a message, and time
is athirst for the third.

Kingdom and empire of peoples thou hadst,
and thy lordship made one
North sea and south sea and east men and
west men that look on the sun ;
Spirit was in thee and counsel, when soul
in the nations was none.

Banner and beacon thou wast to the cen-
turies of stormwind and foam,
Ages that clashed in the dark with each
other, and years without home ;
Empress and prophetess wast thou, and
what wilt thou now be, O Rome ?

Ah, by the faith and the hope and the love
that have need of thee now,
Shines not thy face with the forethought of
freedom, and burns not thy brow ?
Who is against her but all men ? and who
is beside her but thou ?

Art thou not better than all men ? and
where shall she turn but to thee ?
Lo, not a breath, not a beam, not a beacon
from midland to sea ;
Freedom cries out for a sign among nations,
and none will be free.

England in doubt of her, France in despair
of her, all without heart—
Stand on her side in the vanward of ages,
and strike on her part !
Strike but one stroke for the love of her
love of thee, sweet that thou art !

Take in thy right hand thy banner, a strong
staff fit for thine hand ;
Forth at the light of it lifted shall foul things
flock from the land ;
Faster than stars from the sun shall they
fly, being lighter than sand.

Green thing to green in the summer makes
answer, and rose-tree to rose ;
Lily by lily the year becomes perfect ; and
none of us knows
What thing is fairest of all things on earth
as it brightens and blows.

This thing is fairest in all time of all things,
in all time is best—
Freedom, that made thee, our mother, and
suckled hers sons at thy breast ;
Take to thy bosom the nations, and there
shall the world come to rest.

ON THE DOWNS.

A FAINT sea without wind or sun ;
A sky like flameless vapor dun ;
A valley like an unsealed grave
That no man cares to weep upon,
Bare, without boon to crave,
Or flower to save.

And on the lip's edge of the down,
Here where the bent-grass burns to brown
In the dry sea-wind, and the heath
Crawls to the cliff-side and looks down,
I watch, and hear beneath
The low tide breathe.

Along the long lines of the cliff,
Down the flat sea-line without skiff
Or sail or black-blown fume for mark,
Through wind-worn heads of heath and stiff
Stems blossomless and stark
With dry sprays dark,

I send mine eyes out as for news
Of comfort that all these refuse,
Tidings of light or living air
From windward where the low clouds muse
And the sea blind and bare
Seems full of care.

So is it now as it was then,
And as men have been such are men,
There as I stood I seem to stand,
Here sitting chambered, and again
Feel spread on either hand
Sky, sea, and land.

As a queen taken and stripped and bound
Sat 'earth, discolored and discrowned ;
As a king's palace empty and dead
The sky was without light or sound ;
And on the summer's head
Were ashes shed,

Scarce wind enough was on the sea,
 Scarce hope enough there moved in me,
 To sow with live blown flowers of white
 The green plain's sad serenity,
 Or with stray thoughts of light
 Touch my soul's sight.

By footless ways and sterile went
 My thought unsatisfied, and bent
 With blank unspeculative eyes
 On the untracked sands of discontent
 Where, watched of helpless skies,
 Life hopeless lies.

East and west went my soul to find
 Light, and the world was bare and blind
 And the soil herbless where she trod
 And saw men laughing scourge mankind,
 Unsmitten by the rod
 Of any God.

Out of time's blind old eyes were shed
 Tears that were mortal, and left dead
 The heart and spirit of the years,
 And on man's fallen and helmless head
 Time's disanointing tears
 Fell cold as fears.

Hope flowering had but strength to bear
 The fruitless fruitage of despair ;
 Grief trod the grapes of joy for wine,
 Whereof love drinking unaware
 Died as one undivine

And made no sign.
 And soul and body dwelt apart ;
 And weary wisdom without heart
 Stared on the dead round heaven and
 sighed,
 "Is death too hollow as thou art,
 Or as man's living pride"
 And saying so died.

And my soul heard the songs and groans
 That are about and under thrones,
 And felt through all time's murmur thrill
 Fate's old imperious semitones
 That made of good and ill
 One same tune still.

Then "Where is God ? and where is aid ?
 Or what good end of these ?" she said ;
 "Is there no God or end at all,

Nor reason with unreason weighed,
 Nor force to disenhrall
 Weak feet that fall ?

"No light to lighten and no rod
 To chasten men ? Is there no God ?"
 So girt with anguish, iron-zoned,
 Went my soul weeping as she trod
 Between the men enthroned
 And men that groaned.

O fool, that for brute cries of wrong
 Heard not the grey glad mother's song
 Ring response from the hills and waves,
 But heard harsh noises all day long
 Of spirits that were slaves
 And dwelt in graves.

The wise word of the secret earth
 Who knows what life and death are worth,
 And how no help and no control
 Can speed or stay things come to birth
 Nor all world's wheels's that roll
 Crush one born soul.

With all her tongues of life and death,
 With all her bloom and blood and breath,
 From all years dead and all things done,
 In the ear of man the mother saith,
 "There is no God, O son,
 If thou be none."

So my soul sick with watching heard
 That day the wonder of that word,
 And as one springs out of a dream
 Sprang, and the stagnant wells were stirred
 Whence flows through gloom and gleam
 Thought's soundless stream.

Out of pale cliff and sunburnt heath,
 Out of the low sea curled beneath
 In the land's bending arm embayed,
 Out of all lives that thought hears breathe
 Life within life inlaid,
 Was answer made.

A multitudinous monotone
 Of dust and flower and seed and stone,
 In the deep sea-rock's mid-sea sloth,
 In the live waters trembling zone,
 In all men love and loathe,
 One God at growth.

One forceful nature uncreate
 That feeds itself with death and fate,

Evil and good, and change and time,
That within all men lies at wait
Till the hour shall bid them climb
And live sublime.

For all things come by fate to flower
At their unconquerable hour,
And time brings truth, and truth makes
free,
And freedom fills time's veins with power,
As, brooding on that sea,
My thought filled me.

And the sun smote the clouds and slew
And from the sun the sea's breath blew,
And white waves laughed and turned and
fled

The long green heaving sea-field through,
And on them overhead
The sky burnt red.

Like a furred flag that wind sets free,
On the swift summer-colored sea
Shook out the red lines of the light,
The live sun's standard, blown to lee
Across the live sea's white
And green delight.

And with divine triumphant awe
My spirit moved within me saw,
With burning passion of stretched eyes,
Clear as the light's own firstborn law,
In windless wastes of skies
Time's deep dawn rise.

MESSIDOR.

PUT in the sickles and reap ;
For the morning of harvest is red,
And the long large ranks of the corn
Colored and clothed as the morn
Stand thick in the fields and deep
For them that faint to be fed.
Let all that hunger and weep
Come hither, and who would have bread
Put in the sickles and reap.

Colored and clothed as the morn,
The grain grows ruddier than gold,
And the good strong sun is alight
In the mists of the day-dawn white,
And the crescent, a faint sharp horn,
In the fear of his face turns cold
As the snakes of the night-time that creep
From the flag of our faith unrolled.
Put in the sickles and reap.

In the mists of the day-dawn white
That roll round the morning star,
The large flame lightens and grows
Till the red gold harvest-rows,
Full-grown, are full of the light
As the spirits of strong men are,
Crying, Who shall slumber or sleep?
Who put back morning or mar?
Put in the sickles and reap.

Till the red-gold harvest-rows
For miles through shudder and shine
In the wind's breath, fed with the sun,
A thousaad spear-heads as one

Bowed as for battle to close
Line in rank against line
With place and station to keep
Till all men's hands at a sign
Put in the sickles and reap.

A thousand spear-heads as one
Wave as with swing of the sea
When the mid tide sways at its height
For the hour is for harvest or fight
In face of the just calm sun,
As the signal in season may be
And the lot in the helm may leap
When chance shall shake it ; but ye,
Put in the sickles and reap.

For the hour is for harvest or fight
To clothe with raiment of red ;
O men sore stricken of hours,
Lo, this one, is not it ours
To glean, to gather, to smite ?
Let none make risk of his head
Within reach of the clean scythe-sweep,
When the people that lay as the dead
Put in the sickles and reap.

Lo, this one, is not it ours,
Now the ruins of dead things rattle
As dead men's bones in the pit,
Now the kings wax lean as they sit
Girt round with memories of powers,
With musters counted as cattle
And armies folded as sheep
Till the red blind husbandman battle
Put in the sickles and reap.

Now the kings wax lean as they sit,
 The people grow strong to stand ;
 The men they trod on and spat,
 The dumb dread people that sat
 As corpses cast in a pit,
 Rise up with God at their hand,
 And thrones are hurled on a heap,
 And strong men, sons of the land,
 Put in the sickles and reap.

The dumb dread people that sat
 All night without screen for the night,
 All day without food for the day,
 They shall not give their harvest away,
 They shall eat of its fruit and wax fat :
 They shall see the desire of their sight,
 Though the ways of the seasons be steep,
 They shall climb with face to the light,
 Put in the sickles and reap.

ODE ON THE INSURRECTION IN CANDIA.

STR. 1.

I LAID my laurel-leaf
 At the white feet of grief,
 Seeing how with covered face and plumel-
 less wings,
 With unreverted head
 Veiled, as who mourns his dead,
 Lay Freedom couched between the
 thrones of kings,
 A wearied lion without lair,
 And bleeding from base wounds, and vexed
 with alien air.

STR. 2.

Who was it, who, put poi-son to thy mouth,
 Who lulled with craft or chant thy vigi-
 lant eyes,
 O light of all men, lamp to north and
 south,
 Eastward and westward, under all men's
 skies ?
 For if thou sleep, we perish, and thy name
 Dies with the dying of our ephemeral
 breath ;
 And if the dust of death o'ergrows thy
 flame,
 Heaven also is darkened with the dust of
 death.
 If thou be mortal, if thou change or cease,
 If thine hand fail, or thine eyes turn from
 Greece,
 Thy first-born, and the first-fruits of thy
 fame,
 God is no God, and man is moulded out
 of shame.

STR. 3.

Is there change in the secret skies,
 In the sacred places that see
 The divine beginning of things,
 The weft of the web of the world ?

Is Freedom a worm that dies,
 And God no God of the free ?
 Is heaven like as earth with her kings
 And time as a serpent curled
 Round life as a tree ?

From the steel-bound snows of the north
 From the mystic mother, the east,
 From the sands of the fiery south,
 From the low-lit clouds of the west,
 A sound of a cry is gone forth ;
 Arise, stand up from the feast,
 Let wine be far from the mouth,
 Let no man sleep or take rest,
 Till the plague hath ceased.

Let none rejoice or make mirth
 Till the evil thing be stayed,
 Nor grief be lulled in the lute,
 Nor hope be loud on the lyre ;
 Let none be glad upon the earth.
 O music of young man and maid,
 O songs of the bride, be mute.
 For the light of her eyes, her desire,
 Is the soul dismayed.

It is not a land new-born
 That is scourged of a stranger's hand,
 That is rent and consumed with flame.
 We have known it of old, this face.
 With the cheeks and the tresses torn,
 With shame on the brow as a brand.
 We have named it of old by name,
 The land of the royallest race,
 The most holy land.

STR. 4.

Had I words of fire,
 Whose words are weak as snow
 Were my heart a lyre
 Whence all its love might flow

In the mighty modulations of desire,
In the notes wherewith man's passion
worships woe ;

Could my song release
The thought weak words confine,
And my grief, O Greece,
Prove how it worships thine ;
It would move with pulse of war the limbs
of peace
Till she flushed and trembled and became
divine.

(Once she held for true
This truth of sacred strain ;
Though blood drip like dew
And life run down like rain,
It is better that war spare but one or two
Than that many live, and liberty be slain.)

Then with fierce increase
And bitter mother's mirth,
From the womb of peace,
A womb that yearns for birth,
As a man-child should deliverance come to
Greece,
As a saviour should the child be born on
earth.

STR. 5.

O that these my days had been
Ere white peace and shame were wed
Without torch or dancers' din
Round the unsacred marriage bed !
For of old the sweet-tongued law,
Freedom, clothed with all men's love,
Girt about with all men's awe,
With the wild war-eagle mated
The white breast of peace the dove,
And his ravenous heart abated
And his windy wings were furred
In an eyrie consecrated
Where the snakes of strife uncurled,
And her soul was soothed and sated
With the welfare of the world.

ANT. 1.

But now, close-clad with peace,
While war lays hand on Greece,
The kingdoms and their kings stand by to
see ;

"Aha, we're strong," they say,
"We are sure, we are well," even they ;
"And if we serve, what ails ye to be free ?
We are warm, clothed round with peace
and shame ;
But ye lie dead and naked, dying for a
name."

ANT. 2.

O kings and queens and nations miserable
O fools and blind, and full of sins and
fears,
With these it is, with you it is not well ;
Ye have one hour, but these the im-
mortal years.
These for a pang, a breath, a pulse o' pain,
Have honor, while that honor on earth
shall be ;
Ye for a little sleep and sloth shall gain
Scorn, while one man of all men born is
free.
Even as the depth more deep than night or
day,
The sovereign heaven that keeps its eldest
way,
So without chance or change, so without
stain,
The heaven of their high memories shall
not wax nor wane.

ANT. 3.

As the soul on the lips of the dead
Stands poising her wings for flight,
A bird scarce quit of her prison,
But fair without form or flesh,
So stands over each man's head
A splendor of imminent light,
A glory of fame rearsen,
Of day rearsen afresh
From the hells of night.

In the hundred cities of Crete
Such glory was not of old,
Though her name was great upon earth
And her face was fair on the sea.
The words of her lips were sweet,
Her days were woven with gold,
Her fruits came timely to birth ;
So fair she was, being free,
Who is bought and sold.

So fair, who is fairer now
With her children dead at her side,
Unseptrer, unconsecrated,
Unapparelled, unhelped, unpitied,
With blood for gold on her brow,
Where the towery tresses divide ;
The goodly, the golden-gated,
Many-crowned, many-named, many
cited,
Made like as a bride.

And these are the bridegroom's g ts ;
 Anguish that straitens the breath.
 Shame, and the weeping of mothers,
 And the suckling dead at the breast,
 White breast that a long sob lifts :
 And the dumb dead mouth, which saith,
 "How long, and how long, my brothers?"
 And wrath which endures not rest,
 And the pains of death.

ANT. 4.

Ah, but would that men,
 With eyelids purged by tears,
 Saw, and heard again
 With consecrated ears,
 All the clamor, all the splendor, all the
 slain,
 All the lights and sounds of war, the fates
 and fears ;

Saw far off aspire,
 With crash of mine and gate,
 From a single pyre
 The myriad flames of fate,
 Soul by soul transfigured in funereal fire,
 Hate made weak by love, and love made
 strong by hate ;

Children without speech,
 And many a nursing breast ;
 Old men in the breach,
 Where death sat down a guest ;
 With triumphant lamentation made for
 each,
 Let the world salute their ruin and their
 rest.

In one iron hour
 The crescent flared and waned,
 As from tower to tower,
 Fire-scathed and sanguine-stained,
 Death, with flame in hand, an open blood-
 red flower,
 Passed, and where it bloomed no bloom of
 life remained.

ANT. 5.

Hear, thou earth, the heavy-hearted
 Weary nurse of waning races ;
 From the dust of years departed,
 From obscure funeral places,
 Raise again thy sacred head
 Lift the light up of thine eyes ;

Where are they of all thy dead
 That did more than these men dying
 In their godlike Grecian wise ?
 Not with garments rent and sighing,
 Neither gifts of myrrh and gold,
 Shall their sons lament them lying,
 Lest the fame of them wax cold ;
 But with lives to lives replying,
 And a worship from of old.

EPODE.

O sombre heart of earth and swoln with
 grief,
 That in thy time wast as a bird for mirth,
 Dim womb of life and many a seed and
 sheaf,
 And full of changes, ancient heart of
 earth,
 From grain and flower, from grass and every
 leaf,
 Thy mysteries and thymultitudes of birth,
 From hollow and hill, from vales and all
 thy springs,
 From all shapes born and breath of all
 lips made,
 From thunders, and the sound of winds
 and wings,
 From light, and from the solemn sleep of
 shade,
 From the full fountains of all living things,
 Speak, that this plague be stayed.
 Bear witness all the ways of death and life
 If thou be with us in the world's old strife,
 If thou be mother indeed,
 And from these wounds that bleed
 Gather in thy great breast the dews that
 fall,
 And on thy sacred knees
 Lull with mute melodies,
 Mother, thy sleeping sons in death's dim
 hall.
 For these thy sons, behold,
 Sons of thy sons of old,
 Bear witness if these be not as they were ;
 If that high name of Greece
 Depart, dissolve, decease
 From mouths of men and memories like as
 air.

By the last milk that drips
 Dead on the child's dead lips,
 By old men's white unviolated hair,
 By sweet unburied faces
 That fill those red high places
 Where death and freedom found one lion's
 lair,

By all the bloodred tears
That fill the chaliced years,
The vessels of the sacrament of time,
Wherewith, O thou most holy,
O Freedom, sure and slowly
Thy ministrant white hands cleanse earth
of crime ;
Though we stand off afar
Where slaves and slaveries are,
Among the chains and crowns of poisonous
peace ;
Though not the beams that shone
From rent Arcadion
Can melt her mists and bid her snows de-
crease ;

Do thou with sudden wings
Darken the face of kings,
But turn again the beauty of thy brows on
Greece ;
Thy white and woundless brows,
Whereto her great heart bows ;
Give her the glories of thine eyes to see ;
Turn thee, O holiest head,
Toward all thy quick and dead,
For love's sake of the souls that cry for
thee ;
O love, O light, O flame,
By thine own Grecian name,
We call thee and we charge thee that all
these be free.

Jan. 1867.

"NON DOLET."

It does not hurt. She looked along the knife
Smiling, and watched the thick drops
mix and run
Down the sheer blade ; not that which
had been done
Could hurt the sweet sense of the Roman
wife,
But that which was to do yet ere the strife
Could end for each for ever, and the sun :
Nor was the palm yet nor was peace yet
won
While pain had power upon her husband's
life.

It does not hurt, Italia. Thou art more
Than bride to bridegroom ; how shalt
thou not take
The gift love's blood has reddened for
thy sake ?
Was not thy lifeblood given for us be-
fore ?
And if love's heartblood can avail thy
need,
And thou not die, how should it hurt
indeed ?

EURYDICE.

TO VICTOR HUGO

ORPHEUS, the night is full of tears and cries,
And hardly for the storm and ruin shed
Can even thine eyes be certain of her head
Who never passed out of thy spirit's eyes,
But stood and shone before them in such
wise
As when with love her lips and hands
were fed,
And with mute mouth out of the dusty dead
Strove to make answer when thou bad'st
her rise.

Yet viper-stricken must her lifeblood feel
The fang that stung her sleeping, the
foul germ
Even when she wakes of hell's most
poisonous worm,
Though now it writhe beneath her wound-
ed heel,
Turn yet, she will not fade nor fly from
thee ;
Wait, and see hell yield up Eurydice.

AN APPEAL.

I.

ART thou indeed among these,
Thou of the tyrannous crew,
The kingdoms fed upon blood,
O queen from of old of the seas,
England, art thou of them too
That drink of the poisonous flood,
That hide under poisonous trees?

II.

Nay, thy name from of old,
Mother, was pure, or we dreamed;
Purer we held thee than this,
Purer fain would we hold;
So goodly a glory it seemed,
A fame so bounteous of bliss,
So more precious than gold.

III.

A praise so sweet in our ears,
That thou in the tempest of things
As a rock for a refuge shouldst stand,
In the bloodred river of tears
Poured forth for the triumph of kings;
A safeguard, a sheltering land,
In the thunder and torrent of years.

IV.

Strangers came gladly to thee,
Exiles, chosen of men,
Safe for thy sake in thy shade,
Sat down at thy feet and were free;
So men spake of thee then;
Now shall their speaking be stayed?
Ah, so let it not be!

V.

Not for revenge or afright,
Pride, or a tyrannous lust,
Cast from thee the crown of thy praise,
Mercy was thine in thy might;
Strong when thou wert, thou wert just;
Now, in the wrong-doing days,
Cleave thou, thou at least, to the right.

VI.

How should one charge thee, how sway,
Save by the memories that were?
Not thy gold nor the strength of thy ships,
Nor the might of thine armies at bay,
Made thee, mother, most fair;
But a word from republican lips
Said in thy name in thy day.

VII.

Hast thou said it, and hast thou forgot?
Is thy praise in thine ears as a scoff?
Blood of men guiltless was shed,
Children, and souls without spot,
Shed, but in places far off;
Let slaughter no more be, said
Milton; and slaughter was not.

VIII.

Was it not said of thee too,
Now, but now, by thy foes,
By the slaves that had slain their France,
And thee would slay as they slew—
“Down with her walls that enclose
Freemen that eye us askance,
Fugitives, men that are true!”

IX.

This was thy praise or thy blame
From bondsman or freeman—to be
Pure from pollution of slaves,
Clean of their sins, and thy name
Bloodless, innocent, free;
Now if thou be not, thy waves
Wash not from off thee thy shame.

X.

Freeman he is not, but slave,
Whoso in fear for the State
Cries for surety of blood,
Help of gibbet and grave;
Neither is any land great
Whom, in her fear-stricken mood,
These things only can save.

XI.

Lo, how fair from afar,
Taintless of tyranny, stands
The mighty daughter, for years
Who trod the winepress of war ;
Shines with immaculate hands ;
Slays not a foe, neither fears ;
Stains not peace with a scar.

XII.

Be not as tyrant or slave,
England ; be not as these,
Thou that wert other than they.
Stretch out thine hand, but to save ;
Put forth thy strength, and release ;
Lest there arise, if thou slay,
Thy shame as a ghost from the grave.

November 20, 1867.

PERINDE AC CADAVER.

In a vision Liberty stood

By the childless charm-stricken bed
Where, barren of glory and good,
Knowing nought if she would not or would,
England slept with her dead.

Her face that the foam had whitened,
Her hands that were strong to strive,
Her eyes whence battle had lightened,
Over all was a drawn shroud tightened
To bind her asleep and alive.

She turned and laughed in her dream
With grey lips arid and cold ;
She saw not the face as a beam
Burn on her, but only a gleam
Through her sleep as of new-stamped
gold.

But the goddess, with terrible tears
In the light of her down-drawn eyes,
Spake fire in the dull sealed ears ;
"Thou, sick with slumbers and fears,
Wilt thou sleep now indeed or arise ?

"With dreams and with words and with
light
Memories and empty desires
Thou hast wrapped thyself round all night ;
Thou hast shut up thine heart from the
right,
And warmed thee at burnt-out fires.

"Yet once if I smote at thy gate,
Thy sons would sleep not, but heard ;
O thou that wast found so great,
Art thou smitten with folly or fate
That thy sons have forgotten my word ?

"O Cromwell's mother, O breast
That suckled Milton ! thy name
That was beautiful then, that was blest,
Is it wholly discrowned and deprest,
Trodden under by sloth into shame ?

"Why wilt thou hate me and die ?
For none can hate me and live.
What ill have I done to thee ? why
Wilt thou turn from me fighting, and fly,
Who would follow thy feet and forgive ?

"Thou hast seen me stricken, and said,
What is it to me ? I am strong ;
Thou hast seen me bowed down on my
dead
And laughed and lifted thine head,
And washed thine hands of my wrong.

"Thou hast put out the soul of thy sight ;
Thou hast sought to my foemen as friend,
To my traitors that kiss me and smite,
To the kingdoms and empires of night
That begin with the darkness, and end.

"Turn thee, awaken, arise,
With the light that is risen on the lands,
With the change of the fresh-colored skies ;
Set thine eyes on mine eyes,
Lay thy hands in my hands."

She moved and mourned as she heard,
Sighed and shifted her place,
As the wells of her slumber were stirred
By the music and wind of the word,
Then turned and covered her face.

"Ah," she said in her sleep,
 "Is my work not done with and done?
 Is there corn for my sickle to reap?"

And strange is the pathway and steep,
 And sharp overhead is the sun.

"I have done thee service enough,
 Loved thee enough in my day;
 Now nor hatred nor love
 Nor hardly remembrance thereof
 Lives in me to lighten my way.

"And is it not well with us here?
 Is change as good as is rest?
 What hope should move me, or fear,
 That eye should open or ear,
 Who have long since won what is best?"

"Where among us are such things
 As turn men's hearts into hell?
 Have we not queens without stings,
 Scotched princes, and fangless kings?
 Yea," she said, "we are well.

"We have filed the teeth of the snake
 Monarchy, how should it bite?"

Should the slippery slow thing wake,
 It will not sting for my sake;
 "Yea," she said, "I do right."

So spake she, drunken with dreams,
 Mad; but again in her ears
 A voice as of storm-swelled streams
 Spake; "No brave shame then redeems
 Thy lusts of sloth and thy fears?"

"Thy poor he slain of thine hands,
 Their starved limbs rot in thy sight;

As a shadow the ghost of thee stands
 Among men living and lands,
 And stirs not leftward or right.

"Freeman he is not, but slave,
 Who stands not out on my side;
 His own hand hollows his grave,
 Nor strength is in me to save
 Where strength is none to abide.

"Time shall tread on his name
 That was written for honor of old,
 Who hath taken in change for fame
 Dust, and silver, and shame,
 Ashes, and iron, and gold."

MONOTONES.

BECAUSE there is but one truth;
 Because there is but one banner;
 Because there is but one light;
 Because we have with us our youth
 Once, and one chance and one manner
 Of service, and then the night;

Because we have found not yet
 Any way for the world to follow
 Save only that ancient way;
 Whosoever forsake or forget,
 Whose faith soever be hollow,
 Whose hope soever grow grey;

Because of the watchwords of kings
 That are many and strange and unwritten,
 Diverse, and our watchword is one;
 Therefore, though seven be the strings,
 One string, if the harp be smitten,
 Sole sounds, till the tune be done;

Sounds without cadence or change
 In a weary monotonous burden,
 Be the keynote of mourning or mirth;

Free, but free not to range;
 Taking for crown and for guerdon
 No man's praise upon earth;

Saying one sole word evermore,
 In the ears of the charmed world saying,
 Charmed by spells to its death;
 One that chanted of yore
 To a tune of the sword-sweep's playing
 In the lips of the dead blew breath;

Therefore I set not mine hand
 To the shifting of changed modulations,
 To the smiting of manifold strings;
 While the thrones of the throned men stand
 One song for the morning of nations,
 One for the twilight of kings.

One chord, one word, and one way,
 One hope as our law, one heaven,
 Till slain be the great one wrong;
 Till the people it could not slay,
 Risen up, have for one star seven,
 For a single, a sevenfold song.

THE OBLATION.

Ask nothing more of me sweet,
 All I can give you I give
 Heart of my heart, were it more.
 More would be laid at your feet :
 Love that should help you to live,
 Song that should spur you to soar.

All things were nothing to give
 Once to have sense of you more,
 Touch you and taste of you sweet,

Think you and breathe you and live,
 Swept of your wings as they soar,
 Trodden by chance of your feet.

I that have love and no more
 Give you but love of you, sweet :
 He that hath more, let him give ;
 He that hath wings, let him soar ;
 Mine is the heart at your feet
 Here, that must love you to live.

A YEAR'S BURDEN.

FIRE and wild light of hope and doubt and
 fear,
 Wind of swift change, and clouds and hours
 that veer
 As the storm shifts of the tempestuous year ;
 Cry wellaway, but well befall the right.

Hope sits yet hiding her war-wearied eyes,
 Doubt sets her forehead earthward and
 denies,
 But fear brought hand to hand with danger
 dies,
 Dies and is burnt up in the fire of fight.

Hearts bruised with loss and eaten through
 with shame
 Turn at the time's touch to devouring
 flame ;
 Grief stands as one that knows not her own
 name,
 Nor if the star she sees bring day or night

No song breaks with it on the violent air,
 But shrieks of shame, defeat, and brute de-
 spair ;
 Yet something at the star's heart far up
 there
 Burns as a beacon in our shipwrecked
 sight.

O strange fierce light of presage, unknown
 star,
 Whose tongues shall tell us what thy secrets
 are,
 What message trembles in thee from so far ?
 Cry wellaway, but well befall the right.

From shores laid waste across an iron sea
 Where the waifs drift of hopes that were to
 be,
 Across the red rolled foam we look for thee,
 Across the fire we look up for the light.

From days laid waste across disastrous
 years,
 From hopes cut down across a world of
 fears,
 We gaze with eyes too passionate for tears,
 Where faith abides though hope be put to
 flight.

Old hope is dead, the grey-haired hope
 grown blind
 That talked with us of old things out of
 mind,
 Dreams, deeds and men the world has left
 behind ;
 Yet, though hope die, faith lives in hope's
 despite.

Ay, with hearts fixed on death and hope-
 less hands
 We stand about our banner while it stands
 Above but one field of the ruined lands ;
 Cry wellaway, but well befall the right.

Though France were given for prey to bird
 and beast,
 Though Rome were rent in twain of king
 and priest,
 The soul of man, the soul is safe at least
 That gives death life and dead men
 hands to smite.

Are ye so strong, O kings, O strong men?
Nay;

Waste all ye will and gather all ye may,
Yet one thing is there that ye shall not
slay,

Even thought, that fire nor iron can
affright.

The woundless and invisible thought that
goes

Free throughout time as north or south
wind blows,

Far throughout space as east or west sea
flows,

And all dark things before it are made
bright.

Thy thought, thy word, O soul republican,
O spirit of life, O God whose name is
man :

What sea of sorrows but thy sight shall
span ?

Cry wellaway, but well befall the right.

With all its coils crushed, all its rings un-
curled,

The one most poisonous from off the throat
of man, and hurled

Into deep hell from empire's helpless
height.

Time takes no more infection of it now ;
Like a dead snake divided of the plough,
The rotten thing lies cut in twain ; but
thou,

Thy fires shall heal us of the serpent's
bite.

Ay, with cautery and a burning brand
Purge thou the leprous leaven of the
land ;

Take to the fire, and iron in thine hand,
Till blood and tears have washed the
soiled limbs white.

We have sinned against thee in dreams and
wicked sleep ;

Smite, we will shrink not ; strike, we will
not weep ;

Let the heart feed thee ; let thy wound go
deep ;

Cry wellaway, but well befall the right.

Wound us with love, pierce us with long-
ing, make

Our souls thy sacrifices ; turn and take
Our hearts for our sin-offerings lest they
break,

And mould them with thine hands and
give them might.

Then, when the cup of ills is drained in-
deed,

Will we come to thee with our wounds that
bleed,

With famished mouths and hearts that thou
shalt feed,

And see thee worshipped as the world's
delight.

There shall be no more wars nor kingdoms
won,

But in thy sight whose eyes are as the sun
All names shall be one name, all nations
one,

All souls of men in man's one soul unite.

O sea whereon men labor, O great sea
That heaven seems one with, shall these
things not be :

O earth, our earth, shall time not make us
free ?

Cry wellaway, but well befall the right.

EPILOGUE.

BETWEEN the wave-ridge and the strand
 I let you forth in sight of land,
 Songs that with storm-crossed wings and
 eyes
 Strain eastward till the darkness dies ;
 Let signs and beacons fall or stand,
 And stars and balefires set and rise ;
 Ye, till some lordlier lyric hand
 Weave the beloved brows their crown,
 At the beloved feet lie down.

And whatsoever of life or light
 Love hath to give you, what of might
 Or heart or hope is yours to live,
 I charge you take in trust to give
 For very love's sake, in whose sight,
 Through poise of hours alternative
 And seasons plumed with light or night,
 Ye live and move and have your breath,
 To sing with on the ridge of death.

I charge you faint not all night through
 For love's sake that was breathed on you
 To be to you as wings and feet
 For travel, and as blood to heat
 And sense of spirit to renew
 And bloom of fragrance to keep sweet
 And fire of purpose to keep true
 The life, if life in such things be,
 That I would give you forth of me.

Out where the breath of war may bear,
 Out in the rank moist reddened air
 That sounds and smells of death, and
 hath
 No light but death's upon its path
 Seen through the black wind's tangled hair,
 I send you past the wild time's wrath
 To find his face who bade you bear
 Fruit of his seed to faith and love,
 That he may take the heart thereof.

By day or night, by sea or street,
 Fly till ye find and clasp his feet
 And kiss as worshippers who bring
 Too much love on their lips to sing,
 But with hushed heads accept and greet
 The presence of some heavenlier thing
 In the near air ; so may ye meet
 His eyes, and droop not utterly
 For shame's sake at the light you see.

Not utterly struck spiritless
 For shame's sake and unworthiness
 Of these poor forceless hands that come
 Empty, these lips that should be dumb,
 This love whose seal can but impress
 These weak word-offerings wearisome
 Whose blessings have not strength to bless
 Nor lightnings fire to burn up aught
 Nor smite with thunders of their thought.

One thought they have, even love ; one
 light,
 Truth, that keeps clear the sun by night ;
 One chord, of faith as of a lyre ;
 One heat, of hope as of a fire ;
 One heart, one music, and one might,
 One flame, one altar, and one choir ;
 And one man's living head in sight
 Who said, when all time's sea was foam,
 "Let there be Rome,"—and there was
 Rome.

As a star set in space for token
 Like a live word of God's mouth spoken,
 Visible sound, light audible,
 In the great darkness thick as hell
 A stanchless flame of love unsloken,
 A sign to conquer and compel,
 A law to stand in heaven unbroken
 Whereby the sun shines, and where-
 through
 Time's eldest empires are made new

So rose up on our generations
 That light of the most ancient nations,
 Law, life, and light, on the world's way,
 The very God of very day,
 The sun-god ; from their star-like stations
 Far down the night in disarray
 Fled, crowned with fires of tribulations,
 The suns of sunless years, whose light
 And life and law were of the night.

The naked kingdom quenched and stark
 Drave with their dead things down the dark
 Helmless ; their whole world, throne by
 throne,
 Fell, and its whole heart turned to stone,
 Hopeless ; their hands that touched our ark
 Withered ; and lo, aloft, alone,
 On time's white waters man's one bark,
 Where the red sundawn's open eye
 Lit the soft gulf of low green sky

So for a season piloted
 It sailed the sunlight, and struck red
 With fire of dawn reverberate
 The wan face of incumbent fate
 That paused half pitying overhead
 And almost had foregone the freight
 Of those dark hours the next day bred
 For shame, and almost had forsworn
 Service of night for love of morn.

Then broke the whole night in one blow,
 Thundering ; then all hell with one throe
 Heaved, and brought forth beneath the
 stroke
 Death ; and all dead things moved and
 woe

That the dawn's arrows had brought low,
 At the great sound of night that broke
 Thundering, and all the old world-wide
 woe ;
 And under night's loud-sounding dome
 Men sought her, and she was not Rome.

Still with blind hands and robes blood-wet
 Night hangs on heaven, reluctant yet,
 With black blood dripping from her eyes
 On the soiled lintels of the skies,
 With brows and lips that thirst and threat,
 Heart-sick with fear lest the sun rise,
 And aching with her fires that set,
 And shuddering ere dawn bursts her bars,
 Burns out with all her beaten stars.

In this black wind of war they fly
 Now, ere that hour be in the sky
 That brings back hope, and memory back,
 And light and law to lands that lack ;
 That spiritual sweet hour whereby
 The bloody-handed night and black
 Shall be cast out of heaven to die ;
 Kingdom by kingdom, crown by crown,
 The fires of darkness are blown down.

Yet heavy, grievous yet the weight
 Sits on us of imperfect fate.
 From wounds of other days and deeds
 Still this day's breathing body bleeds ;
 Still kings for fear and slaves for hate
 Sow lives of men on earth like seeds
 In the red soil they saturate ;
 And we, with faces eastward set,
 Stand sightless of the morning yet.

And many for pure sorrow's sake
 Look back and stretch back hands to take

Gifts of night's giving, ease and sleep,
 Flowers of night's grafting, strong to
 steep
 The soul in dreams it will not break,
 Songs of soft hours that sigh and sweep
 Its lifted eyelids nigh to wake
 With subtle plumes and lulling breath
 That soothe its weariness to death.

And many, called of hope and pride,
 Fall ere the sunrise from our side.
 Fresh lights and rumors of fresh fames
 That shift and veer by night like flames,
 Shouts and blown trumpets, ghosts that
 glide
 Calling, and hail them by dead names,
 Fears, angers, memories, dreams divide
 Spirit from spirit, and wear out
 Strong hearts of men with hope and
 doubt.

Till time beget and sorrow bear
 The soul-sick eyeless child despair,
 That comes among us, mad and blind,
 With counsels of a broken mind,
 Tales of times dead and woes that were,
 And, prophesying against mankind,
 Shakes out the horror of her hair
 To take the sunlight with its coils
 And hold the living soul in toils.

By many ways of death and moods
 Souls pass into their servitudes.
 Their young wings weaken, plume by
 plume
 Drops, and their eyelids gather gloom
 And close against man's frauds and feuds,
 And their tongues call they know not
 whom
 To help in their vicissitudes ;
 For many slaveries are, but one
 Liberty, single as the sun.

One light, one law, that burns up strife,
 And one sufficiency of life.
 Self-stablished, the sufficing soul
 Hears the loud wheels of changes roll,
 Sees against man man bare the knife,
 Sees the world severed, and is whole ;
 Sees force take dowerless fraud to wife,
 And fear from fraud's incestuous bed
 Crawl forth and smite his father dead :

Sees death made drunk with war, sees time
 Weave many-colored crime with crime,
 State overthrown on ruining state,
 And dares not be disconsolate.

Only the soul hath feet to climb,
 Only the soul hath room to wait
 Hath brows and eyes to hold sublime
 Above all evil and all good,
 All strength and all decrepitude.

She only, she since earth began,
 The many-minded soul of man,
 From one incognisable root
 That bears such divers-colored fruit,
 Hath ruled for blessing or for ban
 The flight of seasons and pursuit ;
 She regent, she republican,
 With wide and equal eyes and wings
 Broods on things born and dying things.

Even now for love or doubt of us
 The hour intense and hazardous
 Hangs high with pinions vibrating
 Whereto the light and darkness cling
 Dividing the dim season thus,
 And shakes from one ambiguous wing
 Shadow, and one is luminous
 And day falls from it ; so the past
 Torments the future to the last.

And we that cannot hear or see[#]
 The sounds and lights of liberty,
 The witness of the naked God
 That treads on burning hours unshod
 With instant feet unwounded ; we
 That can trace only where he trod
 By fire in heaven or storm at sea,
 Not know the very present whole
 And naked nature of the soul ;

We that see wars and woes and kings,
 And portents of enormous things,
 Empires, and agonies, and slaves,
 And whole flame of town-swallowing
 graves ;

That hear the harsh hours clap sharp wings
 Above the roar of ranks like waves,
 From wreck to wreck as the world swings ;
 Know but that men there are who see
 And hear things other far than we,

By the light sitting on their brows,
 The fire wherewith their presence glows,
 The music falling with their feet,
 The sweet sense of a spirit sweet
 That with their speech or motion grows
 And breathes and burns men's hearts
 with heat ;

By these signs there is none but knows
 Men who have life and grace to give,
 Men who have seen the soul and live.

By the strength sleeping in their eyes,
 The lips wheron their sorrow lies
 Smiling, the lines of tears unshed,
 The large divine look of one dead
 That speaks out of the breathless skies
 In silence, when the light is shed
 Upon man's soul of memories ;
 The supreme look that sets love free,
 The look of stars and of the sea ;

By the strong patient godhead seen
 Implicit in their mortal mien,
 The conscience of a God held still
 And thunders ruled by their own will
 And fast-bound fires that might burn clean
 This worldly air that foul things fill,
 And the afterglow of what has been,
 That, passing, shows us without word
 What they have seen, what they have
 heard ;

By all these keen and burning signs
 The spirit knows them and divines.
 In bonds, in banishment, in grief,
 Scoffed at and scourged with unbelief,
 Foiled with false trusts and thwart designs,
 Stripped of green days and hopes in leaf,
 Their mere bare body of glory shines
 Higher, and man gazing surer sees -
 What light, what comfort is of these.

So I now gazing ; till the sense
 Being set on fire of confidence
 Strains itself sunward, feels out far
 Beyond the bright and morning star,
 Beyond the extreme wave's refluxence,
 To where the fierce first sunbeams are
 Whose first intolerant and intense
 As birthpangs whence day burns to be
 Parts breathless heaven from breathing sea.

I see not, know not, and am blest,
 Master, who know that thou knowest,
 Dear lord and leader, at whose hand
 The first days and the last days stand,
 With scars and crowns on head and breast,
 That fought for love of the sweet land
 Or shall fight in her latter quest ;
 All the days armed and girt and crowned
 Whose glories ring thy glory round.

Thou sawest, when all the world was blind,
 The light that should be of mankind,
 The very day that was to be ;
 And how shalt thou not sometime see

Thy city perfect to thy mind
 Stand face to living face with thee,
 And no miscrowned man's head behind ;
 The hearth of man, the human home,
 The central flame that shall be Rome ?

As one that ere a June day rise
 Makes seaward for the dawn and tries
 The water with delighted limbs
 That taste the sweet dark sea and swims
 Right eastward under strengthening skies,
 And sees the gradual rippling rims
 Of waves whence day breaks blossom-wise
 Take fire ere light peer well above,
 And laughs from all his heart with love ;

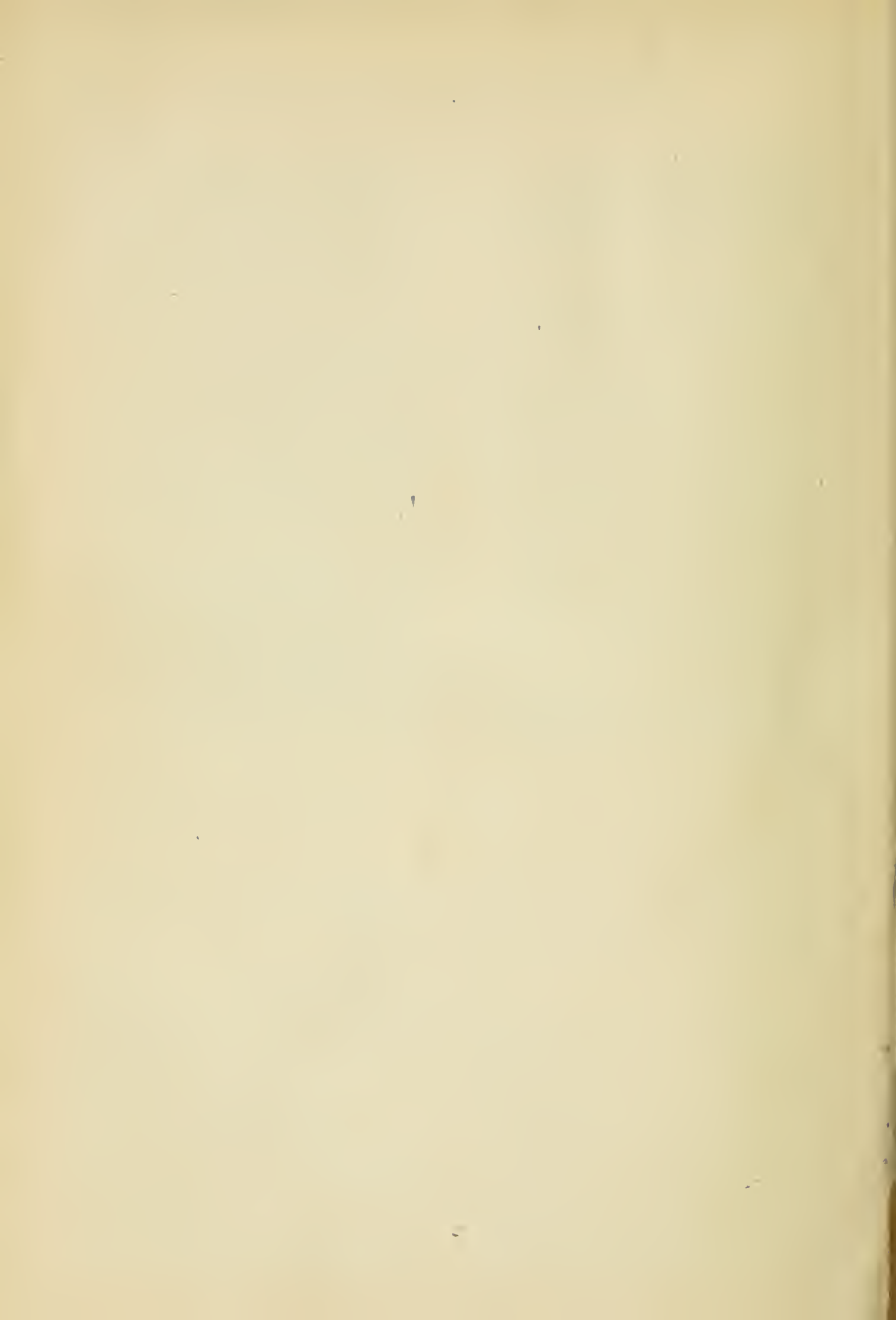
And softer swimming with raised head
 Feels the full flower of morning shed
 And fluent sunrise round him rolled
 That laps and laves his body bold
 With fluctuant heaven in water's stead,
 And urgent through the growing gold
 Strikes, and sees all the spray flash red,
 And his soul takes the sun, and yearns
 For joy wherewith the sea's heart burns ;

So the soul seeking through the dark
 Heavenward, a dove without an ark,

Transcends the unnavigable sea
 Of years that wear out memory ;
 So calls a sunward-singing lark,
 In the ear of souls that should be free
 So points them toward the sun for mark
 Who steer not for the stress of wakes,
 And seek strange helmsmen, and are
 slaves.

For if the swimmer's eastward eye
 Must see no sunrise—must put by
 The hope that lifted him and led
 Once, to have light about his head,
 To see beneath the clear low sky
 The green foam-whitened wave wax red
 And all the morning's banner fly—
 Then, as earth's helpless hopes go down,
 Let earth's self in the dark tides drown.

Yea, if no morning must behold
 Man, other than were they now cold,
 And other deeds than past deeds done,
 Nor any near or far-off sun
 Salute him risen and sunlike-souled,
 Free, bounddless, fearless, perfect, one,
 Let man's world die like worlds of old,
 And here heaven's sight only be
 The sole sun on the worldless sea.





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Poetical works

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